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**Social Change and Social Contradictions:  
The China Dilemma**

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# Social Change and Social Contradictions: The China Dilemma

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Changing China: Three Decades of Social  
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## **Changing China: Three Decades of Social Transformation**

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### **Abstract**

China is a country in great transformation. Over the last three decades the highly remarkable economic performance of the once low-income and inward-looking state of China has attracted increasing interest from academics and policymakers. China's astounding transformation is reflected not only in her economy, but also in her social changes in the past few decades, and this inevitably is also going to have implications for the country's domestic sociopolitical development. For instance, the country's breakneck economic transformation and the accompanying income and wealth disparities could be engendering increasingly volatile intergroup relations that would result in intensified resource contest which in turn may see groups coalesce along socioracial and ascriptive lines and thus further polarized by such divides, aggravated by transnational influences brought about by the selfsame globalization that has ironically contributed to her very economic "miracle" in the first place. Adapting Green's change process model (2008) and Reeler's threefold theory of social change (2007) to the China context, this paper investigates how various dimensions of social change have been engendered by the three decades of Chinese economic reform and how these various facets of social change are impacting on the coming direction and trajectory of the country's socioeconomic and political transformation, how the interplay of State policy and societal response within the context of the exigencies engendered by the country's continued odyssey of development, modernization and reform is shaping the future of the civil society, and how from both the theoretical and empirical perspectives the complex polity-economy-society nexus involved in the transformation of modern China are having wider ramifications for the country's future.

**Keywords:** *China, social change, anomie, dictablanda, critical junctures*



## 1. Introduction

Since the launching of the *gaige kaifang* (open and reform) policy<sup>1</sup> in the late 1970s, China has been experiencing a tumultuous process of social change in a short span of just three decades. Among other aspects, socioeconomic, sociopolitical, sociobehavioural and sociopsychological transformations have grasped the nation in a frenzy. While the world looks upon China's "peaceful rise" with much fascination and probably a certain level of trepidation, and the wide Chinese diaspora takes pride in the reborn greatness of the Middle Kingdom, what has often been overlooked in the popular imagination is the equally amazing transformation in the mainland Chinese society – whether it be psychological, behavioural, political or economic.

Marxism, which has provided the *raison d'être* of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)<sup>2</sup> in its continued political monopoly under the new conceptual politico-economic framework of "socialism with Chinese characteristics", considers conflict, in particular class conflict, as a fundamental characteristic of society and that continued class struggles would result in more and more fundamental changes in society, and while it is not certain that all social changes actually result from conflicts, both Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's philosophy of history and Karl Marx's social theory as well as many of their derivative theoretical frameworks essentially assert or insinuate that they do (Bottomore, 1975: 174-175). Intergroup and intragroup conflicts may evidently lead to social changes or create a predisposition to change by disconcerting the conventional and prevailing ways of life, and such conflicts include competition whose effects could be beneficial or harmful for social relations, the former through its socializing and civilizing function as Émile Durkheim and Georg Simmel saw as the creation of a network of mutual obligations and dependencies, and the latter through the generation of social ills such as mental illness and crime (*ibid.*). What may be disconcerting especially for a culture or ideology that places great value on peace, harmony and stability is that social conflicts have also been seen as universally necessary, as Ralf Dahrendorf, in his argument of the existence of crisscrossing lines of conflict in place of Marx's single fundamental cleavage in society, posited that conflict is a necessary element in all imperatively coordinated associations which in turn are a universally necessary feature of the human society (Dahrendorf, 1959: 172, 268; Bottomore, 1975: 171), or as Eisenstadt saw it:

[...] different coalitions of elites construct the boundaries of social systems, collectivities, and organizations. Yet no such construction can be continuously stable. The crystallization and reproduction of any social order, of any collectivity, organization, political system, or civilizational framework is shaped by the different forces and factors [...] and generates processes of conflict, change, and possible transformation.

(Eisenstadt, 1992: 416)

Furthermore, as Newman posited, “[the] greater the degree of reward disparity and social segregation between a dominant and a subordinate group, the greater the likelihood that conflicts between them will be relatively intense” or even violent (see Newman, 1973: 158-9) – a case where each social conflict situation produces exactly the same pattern of domination and subordination, a phenomenon Dahrendorf (1959) called the “superimposition of conflict”. In this regard, Lijphart’s remark on religious cleavage is equally applicable to other socioracial<sup>3</sup> ones, with grave implications for ethnoregionalism and peripheral nationalism to which this special issue will later return:

If, for example, the religious cleavage and the social class cleavage crosscut to a high degree, the different religious groups will tend to feel equal. If, on the other hand, the two cleavages tend to coincide, one of the groups is bound to feel resentment over its inferior status and unjustly meager share of material rewards.

(Lijphart, 1977: 75)

## 2. Currents and Undercurrents of Social Change

In the subsequent sections, this paper will examine various crucial aspects of social change since China’s ruling regime launched its “Reform and Open” policy in the late 1970s – in particular the very different pace of socioeconomic and sociopolitical changes that could be an important contributing factor to the pronounced features of contradictions that unmistakably characterize the contemporary Chinese society. Every society is different and, as Eisenstadt noted, there is no grand theory that could faithfully explain the development of such contradictions everywhere:

Although these potentialities of conflict and change are inherent in all human societies, their concrete development, their intensity, and the concrete directions of change and transformation they engender differ greatly among different societies and civilizations. Societies vary in their specific constellation of the specific forces [...] that is, different constellations of cultural orientations, elites, patterns of the social division of labor, and political-ecological settings and processes.

(Eisenstadt, 1992: 418)

In full recognition of this, nevertheless, this paper would still attempt to delve further into the complex nexus of the agent-institution-event-context interface (Section 4, Figure 19) that could be playing a crucial role in engendering such social contradictions shaped inevitably by the currents and undercurrents of social change that will be scrutinized here within the theoretical framework adapted from Reeler’s threefold theory of social change (2007).

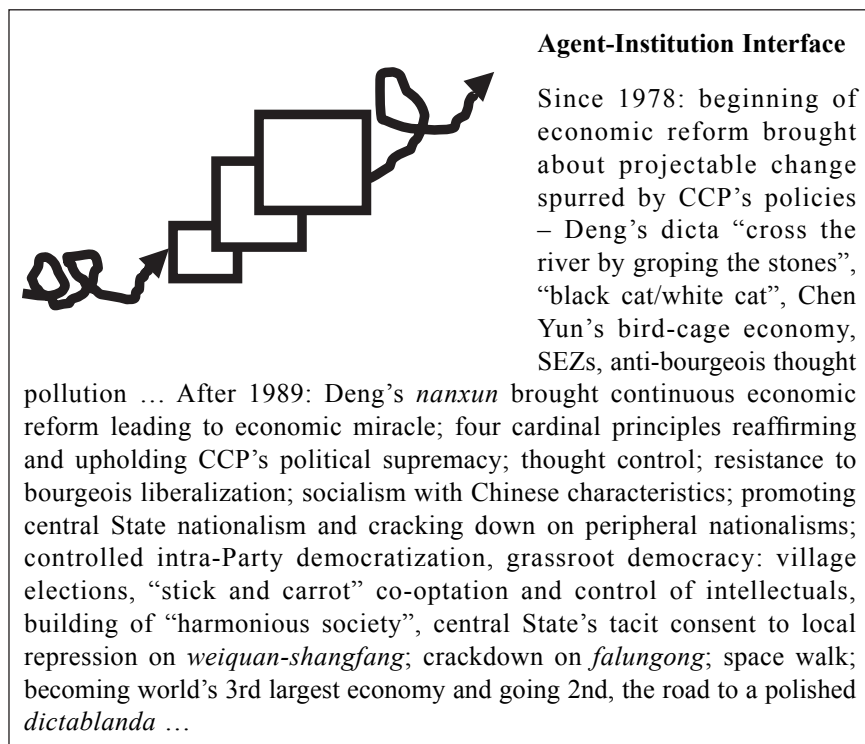
## 2.1. Projectable Change

*Atado, y bien atado.* [Tied-up, well tied-up.]

Generalísimo Francisco Franco (*El Caudillo*),  
prior to his death on 20th November 1975

Reeler's (2007) threefold theory of social change, while originally applying to a rather different context and usage, could be adapted here to throw light on the three decades of intricately interrelated socioeconomic, sociopolitical and sociocultural changes in contemporary China. Early years of reform underlain by Deng's well-known gradualist dictum "Cross the river by groping the stones"<sup>4</sup> signifies the problem-based approach that characterizes projectable change. However, the other characteristic of projectable change that entails creativity – "imagining or visioning desired results, not as a direct solution but as a new situation in which old problems are less or no longer relevant – a leap of imagination into the future" (*ibid.*: 13) made the results

Figure 1 Reeler's Projectable Change: The Chinese Context



Source: Based on Reeler (2007: 13).

of such change less certain for post-1989 China as they are highly dependent on such prerequisites:

Projectable approaches, through projects, tend to succeed where problems, needs and possibilities are more visible, under relatively stable conditions and relationships, which are not fraught with crisis or stuckness. Where the internal and external environments, especially the relationships, of a system are coherent, stable and predictable enough, and where unpredictable outcomes do not threaten desired results, then the conditions for projectable change arise and well-planned projects become possible.

(*ibid.*)

## 2.2. Emergent Change

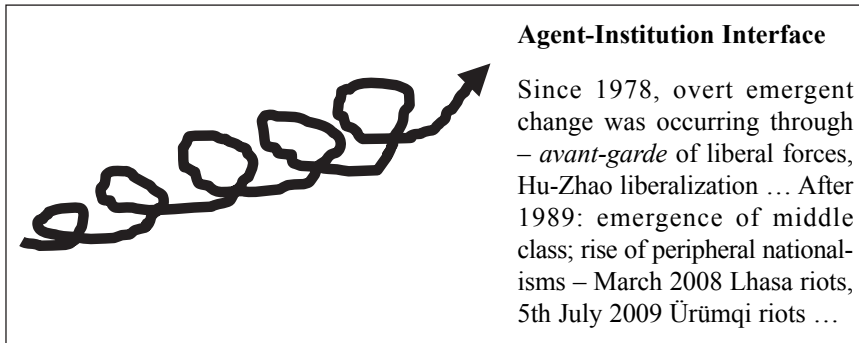
The air does not cease to have weight, although we no longer feel that weight.

Émile Durkheim (1858-1917)<sup>5</sup>

Citing an African proverb “We make our path by walking it”, Reeler (2007) defined “emergent change” – probably the most prevalent and enduring form of change – as a description of “the day-to-day unfolding of life, adaptive and uneven processes of unconscious and conscious learning from experience and the change that results from that”, which “applies to individuals, families, communities, organisations and societies adjusting to shifting realities, of trying to improve and enhance what they know and do, of building on what is there, step-by-step, uncertainly, but still learning and adapting, however well or badly” (*ibid.*: 9). He differentiated between two kinds of emergent change – the less conscious and the more conscious varieties, which this paper termed respectively the subliminal or latent emergent change and the overt emergent change.

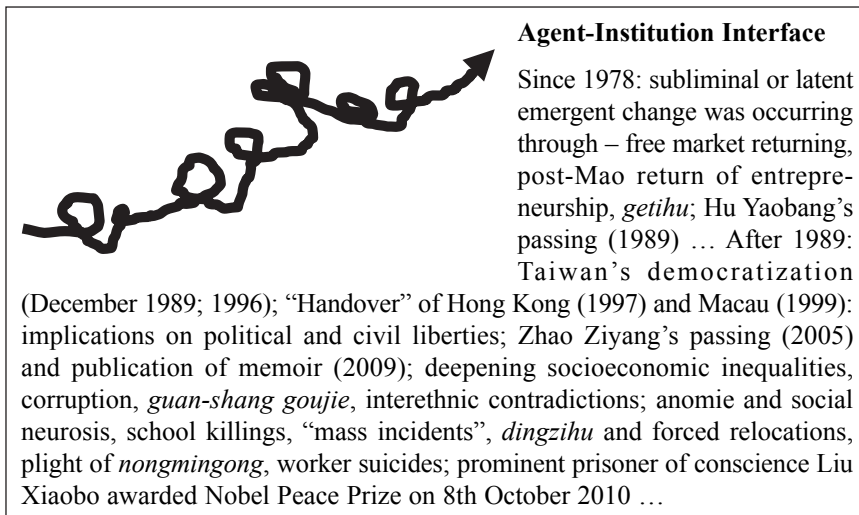
The overt emergent change – Reeler’s more conscious variety – usually occurs within a relatively stable and less openly contradictory environment “where identity, relationships, structures and leadership are more formed”, and conditions for such change can materialize after the resolution of a crisis or after a period of projectable change as a result of change fatigue or a preference for gains consolidation and more gradual and stable growth (*ibid.*: 10). On the other hand, the subliminal or latent emergent change – Reeler’s less conscious variety – usually occurs within a shifting and uncertain environment “where there are unformed and unclear identities, relationships, structures or leadership”, and without evident crises or stucknesses, and being less conscious it is characteristically still in formation, less predictable and more chaotic or haphazard, and also “therefore most difficult to grasp, requires a reading of enormous respect and subtlety” (*ibid.*).

Figure 2 Overt (Reeler's More Conscious) Emergent Change:  
The Chinese Context



Source: Based on Reeler (2007: 10).

Figure 3 Subliminal (Reeler's Less Conscious) Emergent Change:  
The Chinese Context



Source: Based on Reeler (2007: 10).

### 2.3. Transformative Change

Truth is on the march; nothing can stop it now.

Émile Zola (1840-1902)

Another type of social change in Reeler's threefold taxonomy is one stemmed from a crisis or stuckness which could take many forms and manifestations – may they be "hot" surfaced experiences of visible conflict or 'cold' hidden

stucknesses which cannot be seen or talked about” (*ibid.*: 12). What a ruling regime that survived on imposed harmony and stability may fail to recognize or be wary to recognize is that such crisis-induced change is perfectly natural for the human society:

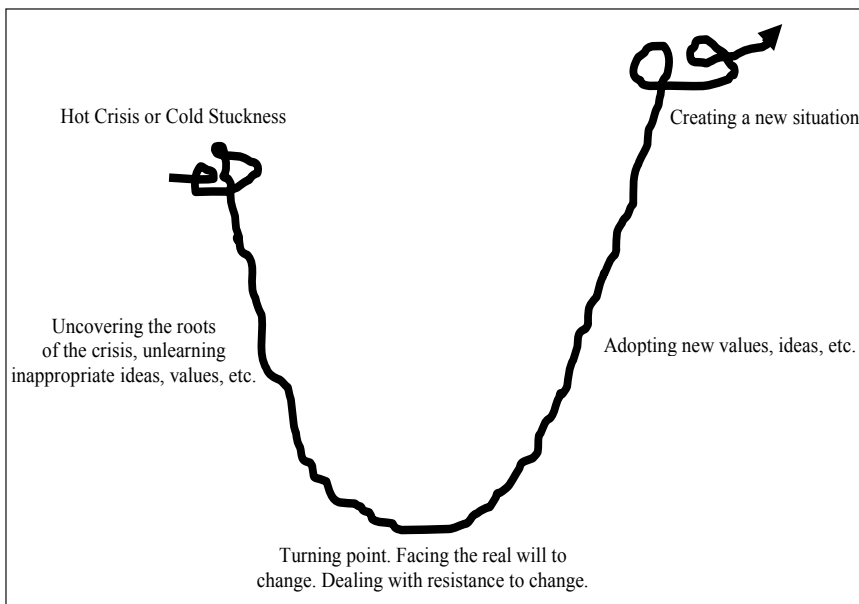
The possibility of the failure of integrative and regulative mechanisms is inherent in any society. Every civilization and every type of political and economic system constructs some specific systematic boundaries within which it operates. But the very construction of such civilizations and social systems also generates within them various conflicts and contradictions that *may* lead to change, transformation, or decline, that is, to different modes of restructuring their boundaries.

(Eisenstadt, 1992: 418)

And to make things worse, policy decisions based on such inadequate recognition tend to beget even more inadequate decisions given the difficulty of admitting public policy errors, or as Rousseau once said, “When one starts covering the truth with a veil, they no longer make the effort to lift it.” (Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762), *Émile, ou De l’éducation*, Book II, Para. 341<sup>6</sup>)

One does not need to look too far back in contemporary Chinese history to see how a crisis of mammoth proportions could bring a nation to a bifurcation into wholesale transformative change – which, unlike emergent change that is characterized as a learning process, involves instead unlearning, a liberation “from those relationships and identities, inner and outer, which underpin the crisis and hold back resolution and further healthy development” – and a cold stuckness which under a façade of economic prosperity and social harmony could continue to hide the real need for change which in turn when revealed could provoke even stronger resistance to change as it requires the unlearning of entrenched ideas and values in making way for the acceptance of new ones; it is a difficult choice as a crisis and stuckness of this nature tend to involve deep and complex histories and dynamics and represent the product of “tense or contradictory relationships [...] prompted by shifts in external political, economic, cultural or environmental contexts” (*ibid.*: 11-12). A particular choice at the moment of crisis could thus lead to protracted cold stuckness, instead of a U-process of transformative change<sup>7</sup>, thus heightening internal social contradictions leading to deteriorating sociopolitical and sociocultural anomie<sup>8</sup> and neurosis resulted from the contradictions engendered by the interplay of projected change and the suppressed but unstoppable overt and subliminal emergent changes – contradictions whose impacts are particularly manifest in the presence of ethnic diversity, ethnoterritoriality, ethnoregional inequality and peripheral nationalism, dimensions to which this special issue will later return.

Figure 4 Reeler's U-Process of Transformative Change



Source: Reeler (2007: 12).

### 3. Sociobehavioural Change and Socioeconomic Transformation

Social problems are multi-dimensional. Nevertheless, mental illness and crime as mentioned above usually stand out as indicators in the public imagination.

#### 3.1. Sociobehavioural Transition

Mental illness, mental breakdown and suicides are among the most outstanding of indicators of the negative impact of social change. Shocking the nation was the recent spate of suicides and attempted suicides<sup>9</sup> at the Foxconn 富士康 conglomerate's factory in Shenzhen 深圳, Guangdong province, that resulted in the death or injury of more than a dozen workers within the short span of about 4 months (from the first suicide on 23 January 2010 to end of May), which continued with the fatal thirteenth and fourteenth "jumps" at its factories in Foshan 佛山, Guangdong, and Kunshan 昆山, Jiangsu, respectively on 20th July and 4th August<sup>10</sup>. Currently the number of suicides in China is huge. Suicide is now the fifth main cause of death in China where there are over 250 thousand people killing themselves every year, with a rate of a suicide every two minutes (Wang, 2008: 755). On average every day there are about 750 people in China committing suicide, and there

are an additional number of 2 million people attempting suicide (non-fatal) in China every year (*ibid.*; Tang, 2007). In terms of age distribution, suicide rate in China is highest among the elderly and within the 25-34 year-old cohort; in terms of gender, China's female suicide rate is apparently higher than male, particularly for rural female and especially high for the 25-34 year-old cohort and women above age 65 (Wang, 2008: 755; Xiao, Wang and Xu, 2003).

Regarding crime, Wang (2008: 753-754) listed the following seven characteristics of criminal activities in contemporary China:

- 1) Abruptness and scale. This refers both to large-scale organized crime that emerged in recent years as well as the sudden outbreak of violent crimes like the fatal free-floating aggression against young children in primary schools or kindergartens across China that broke out recently from March to May 2010 killing a total of 17 people, including 15 children, and injuring more than 80, in a string of five major attacks and four other cases that occurred from 23rd March to 12th May<sup>11</sup>, and another attack on 3rd August that killed 4 and injured more than 20 at a kindergarten in Shandong<sup>12</sup>.
- 2) Tendency towards higher social strata. This refers to on-the-job crimes committed by high-level officials and hi-tech skilled personnel.
- 3) Abuse of public office power getting severe. Such high-level corruption is increasingly becoming a cancer in socioeconomic and political life and damaging social justice. The Appendix table at the end of this article shows government data released in 2006 on 40 corrupt officials who fled the country. Other than the first five, most of those in the list were leaders of State-owned enterprises. The number of corrupt officials who fled the country was said to total about 500 by 2006, according to Shang (2007: 11), while according to Wang (2008: 758), based on data released for the first time by the Commerce Department, the number was as high as over 4000 by 2006, with total amount of embezzlement as high as US\$50 billion. Just to take the provincial road and transport department alone, government statistics show that from 1997 to 2006 a total of 18 provincial road and transport department heads all over the country had been arrested for corruption, and there were even more officials arrested for corruption below the provincial department level (Shang, 2007: 6). Among the overseas sanctuaries of Chinese corrupt officials, Canada was reported to be a paradise with an alleged number of over 2000 Chinese corrupt officials with total amount of embezzlement of at least over a hundred billion yuan (¥).<sup>13</sup> Canada is also, for the past decade, the refuge of Lai Changxing 赖昌星, the famed founder and head of Xiamen's Yuanhua 远华 Group, who tops the list of fleeing billionaires wanted by the Chinese government in terms of amount of alleged embezzlement with 25 billion yuan.<sup>14</sup> He fled in 1999.



- 4) Resurgence and rapid spreading of large number of crimes of the traditional society. Crimes that had literally disappeared in post-1949 China – for instance, through policy measures against illicit drug abuse in 1950, against brothels in 1951, against secret societies in 1953 – have resurfaced and spread like wildfire, including drug abuse and narcotrafficking, smuggling, prostitution, activities of the criminal underworld and gambling. Secret societies of the underworld were said to total tens of thousands, with members total over a million, rampantly committing violent, cold-blooded and unspeakable crimes (Shang, 2007: 106). Besides, the rise in youth crimes has been alarming, with government statistics (for 2005, see *ibid.*: 114-116) showing 70 per cent of people committing crimes being youths below 25 years of age, and over 70 per cent of youth crimes were committed by those of age 15-16 years. The number of youths committing crimes grew by 5.8 per cent during the period 2003-2005, with apparent increase in crimes by those below 18 years of age, involving also an increase in the types and methods of crime, as well as in vileness of the nature of crime. Among the country's 220 million young students, there was an average of one criminal case committed per minute (*ibid.*: 114). Government statistics show that the country's population involved in drug abuse reached a cumulative 1.16 million by end of 2005, among whom youths constituted 75 per cent of the total, 80 per cent of male drug addicts were involved in other crimes and 80 per cent of female drug addicts were engaged in prostitution (*ibid.*: 116). The total number of drug addicts in China is increasing by 15-20 per cent per annum (Wang, 2008: 756). The main illicit drug consumed in China is heroin, and there are currently about 700 thousand heroin addicts in China, constituting 78.3 per cent of the total number of drug addicts, and among these heroin addicts 69.3 per cent are youths below 35 years of age (*ibid.*). On the other hand, the organized criminal underworld, after having its heyday during the 1930s-1940s, virtually disappeared from the mainland after 1949 when it moves abroad (including Hong Kong 香港, Macau 澳門 and Taiwan 台灣) to escape the draconian measures of the new regime, but has been penetrating back with a vengeance since the beginning of economic reform (Wang, 2008: 757).
- 5) New forms of crime emerge in an endless stream. With economic globalization, various new forms of crime exhibit apparent tendencies of internationalization, formal organization and intelligence, including illicit drug crimes, production and selling of fake and inferior goods, as well as environmental crimes.
- 6) Distinctive geographical distribution of crimes. While there are more transnational/ transregional organized crimes in the southeastern regions like the provinces of Guangdong and Fujian which are adjacent to Hong

Kong, Macau and Taiwan, transnational illicit drug cases are relatively more numerous in the southwestern regions like the provinces of Yunnan and Guizhou and the three northeastern provinces (see Figures 5 and 6 for the regional demarcations), and economic crimes are relatively more rampant in the cities of the Pearl River Delta and the Yangzi River Delta. Such coastal and river plate cities and areas with relatively higher economic openness have crime types that are apparently different from those of the country's northwestern regions. Besides the concentration of drug addicts (25.9 per cent) in the three provinces of Yunnan, Guizhou and Sichuan, these economically or commercially advanced coastal regions have equally serious problem with the provinces of Guangdong and Guangxi together contributing 25.7 per cent of drug addicts to the national total and Guangdong alone contributing 15.6 per cent (Wang, 2008: 756).

- 7) Increasing proportion of crimes committed by population on the move in total crime rate. This refers to the rural-to-urban migrants whose feeling of relative deprivation *vis-à-vis* the urban residents is leading to increasingly acute intergroup contradictions and tendency of crime.

### 3.2. Socioeconomic Transformation and Social Order

Regarding the issue of corruption, in recent years, the “neo-corporatism” hypothesis emerged to claim that while the traditional Leviathan hypothesis from the school of public choice reappeared in Russia in the form of the “grapping hand” hypothesis, China is instead characterized by a “helping hand” (Krug and Zhu, 2004; Frye and Shleifer, 1997; Shleifer and Vishny, 1994, 1998; Oi, 1992, 1995, Unger and Chan, 1995, Nee, 2000; summarized in Krug, Zhu and Hendrichske, 2004).<sup>15</sup> Gu and Chen (2002) concluded on the results of their multiregional analysis: “[...] in the case of China, the corruption of the helping hand when taxes are decentralized can be socially preferable to the corruption of the grabbing hand when taxes are centralized.” Ahlin (2000), based on a conceptual model, argued that though deconcentration has the potential to increase corruption, political decentralization has the potential to contain it due to interjurisdictional competition, while empirical evidence from Crook and Manor (2000) shows that political decentralization reduces large-scale corruption but increases the petty one in the short run, but both may decline in the long run, and Olowu (1993) considered political centralization a root cause of endemic corruption in Africa.<sup>16</sup> Huther and Shah (1998) also found that increased fiscal decentralization was associated with enhanced quality of governance, political and bureaucratic accountability, social justice, improved economic management and reduced corruption. In this regard, China's high degree of economic decentralization should be noted.<sup>17</sup>

Figure 5 China: Three Economic Regions



Notes: Province/Zizhiqu/Zhixiashi in the officially designated Western Region in bold italics.  
— Regional Boundary

Figure 6 China: Six Economic Regions



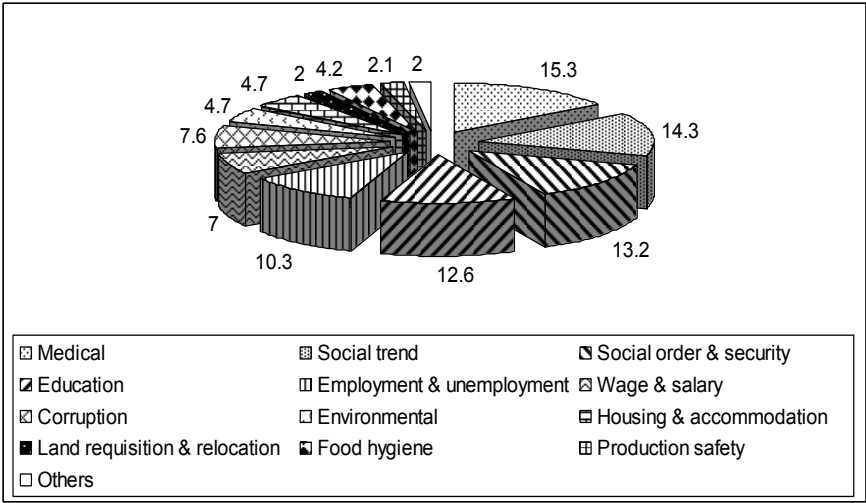
Notes: Province/Zizhiqu/Zhixiashi in the officially designated Western Region under the three-region scheme in bold italics.  
— Regional Boundary

Figure 7 shows the results of a sample survey by the National Statistical Bureau conducted in early November 2007 in all 31 provinces (*sheng* 省) / *zizhiqu* 自治区 (“autonomous region”) / *zhixiashi* 直辖市 (municipality with province status, directly ruled by the central government)<sup>18</sup> covering 101,029 families regarding social problems the respondents were most concerned with. Out of the 13 types of social problems, the medical, those regarding social trend (social situation), social order and security, education and employment/unemployment are the top five, constituting 15.3 per cent, 14.3 per cent, 13.2 per cent, 12.6 per cent and 10.3 per cent respectively. Urban residents were most concerned with employment/unemployment, social trend, social order and security and wage and salary, while rural residents were most concerned with the medical issue, social trend, education and social order and security. This shows that social trend and social order and security are the common concerns of both urban and rural residents, while the concern with employment/unemployment and wage and salary issues are more urban than rural and the medical issues and children’s education are more the concerns of rural than urban residents.

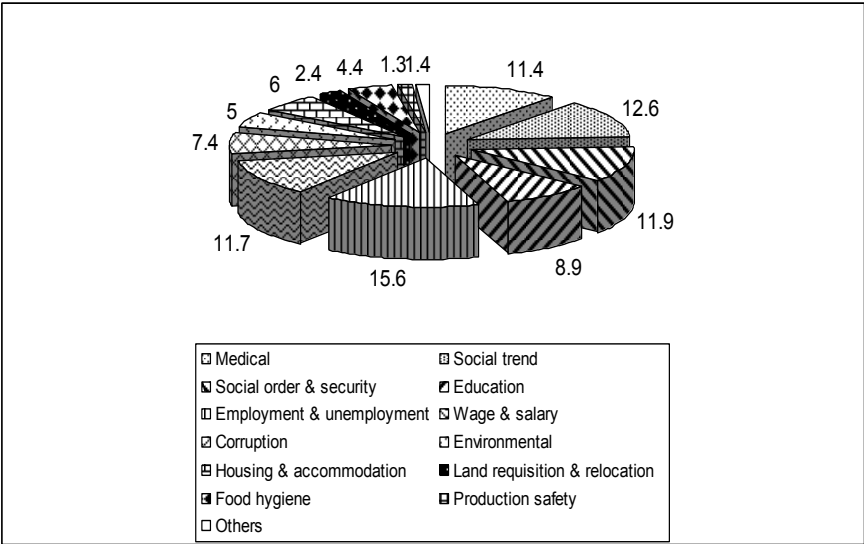
It should be noted that many of these such as land requisition and relocation<sup>19</sup> (which has particularly attracted attention in various *dingzihu* 钉子户<sup>20</sup> cases), wage, employment, housing and accommodation, environment and food hygiene and safety are closely linked in this country to the issue of corruption and government-business collusion (*guan-shang goujie* 官商勾结).

Figure 7 China: Most Concerned Social Problems (%), 2007

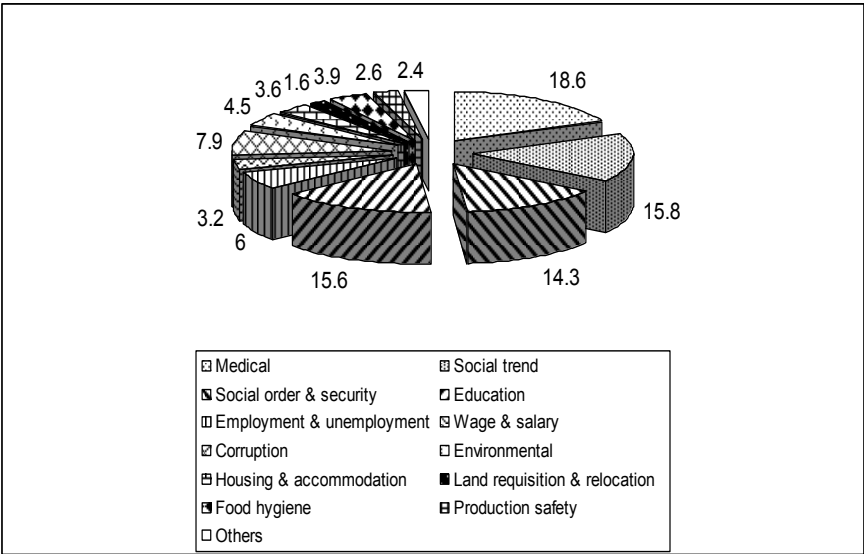
(a) All China



(b) Urban China



(c) Rural China



Source: *Zhongguo Shehui Tongji Nianjian 2008*, p. 412, Table 6.

商勾结, here referring to the collusion between local government officials and businessmen or entrepreneurs in return for favours) and contribute to widespread popular resentment and constitute the source of most public protests – officially labeled *quntixing shijian* 群体性事件 or *qunti shijian* 群体事件, literally “mass incidents” which take various forms “from peaceful small-group petitions and sit-ins to marches and rallies, labor strikes, merchant strikes, student demonstrations, ethnic unrest, and even armed fighting and riots” (Tanner, 2004: 138) – often against the police and the local governments.

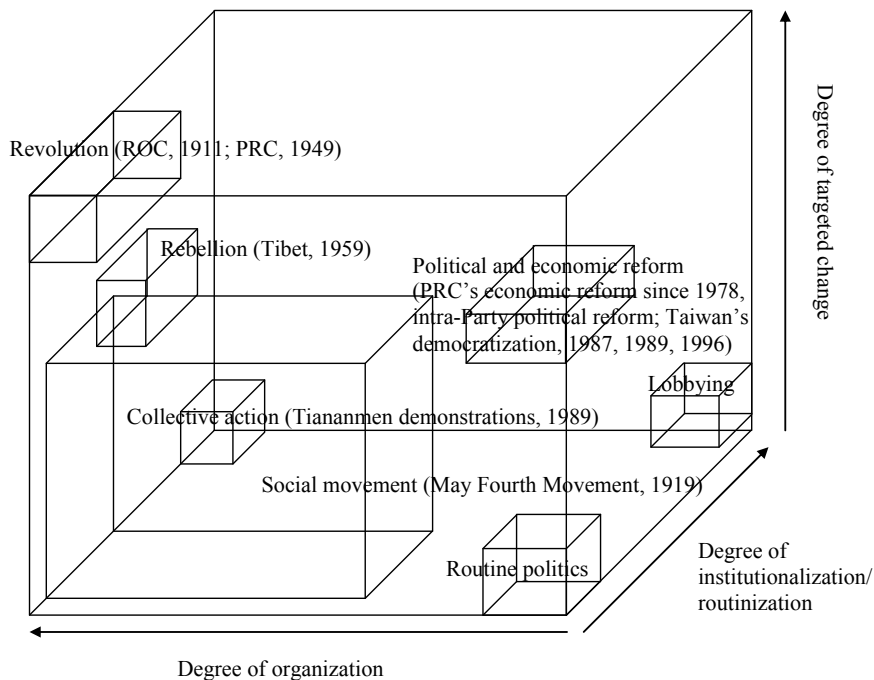
After the crackdown on the massive 1989 demonstrations which actually began with smaller-scale anti-corruption protests, this root cause of the protests has gone worse, not better. Citing Sun Yan in *Current History* (2005), Hutton (2006: 127) reminded us that “large-scale corruption is mounting. The average ‘take’ in the 1980s was \$5000; now it is over \$250,000. The number of arrests of senior cadre members above the county level quadrupled between 1992 and 2001 [...]. In 2005 it was disclosed that a cool \$1 billion had been misappropriated or embezzled in Gansu, one of China’s poorest provinces, by a ring of forty or more officials.” Hutton cited Hu’s (2006) estimate that the annual economic loss due to corruption over the late 1990s alone amounted to between 13.3 and 16.9 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), while evidence provided by government departments revealed that the annual economic loss between 1999 and 2001 due to corruption averaged 14.5 to 14.9 per cent of GDP.<sup>21</sup> As Hutton (2006: 127) noted, “Every incident of corruption – smuggling, embezzlement, theft, swindling, bribery – arises in the first place from the unchallengeable power of communist officials and the lack of any reliable, independent system of accountability and scrutiny [...] the evidence of the depth of corruption at the apex of government, business and finance, mean that any paradoxical usefulness [of corruption in the early years of reform in providing flexibility to an otherwise highly bureaucratic system] has long since been surpassed. Corruption to this extent is chronically dysfunctional and even threatens the integrity of the state.” This threat to the integrity of the State is most evident in the worrying frequency of incidents of social unrest which mostly stem from protests against local official corruption and abuse of power, including the local governments’ suppression of *weiquan-shangfang* 维权上访<sup>22</sup>. For instance, in 2005 alone, such public order disturbances amounted to 87,000 cases, or an average of almost 240 a day, involving about 4 million people<sup>23</sup>. While social unrest among farmers and workers has long been observed since the early 1990s, as Lum (2006: “Summary”) described, “recent protest activities have been broader in scope, larger in average size, greater in frequency, and more brash than those of a decade ago”:

According to Chinese Communist Party sources, social unrest has grown by nearly 50% in the past two years, culminating in a particularly violent episode in December 2005. China's Public Security Ministry declared that there were 87,000 cases of "public order disturbance" – including protests, demonstrations, picketing, and group petitioning – in 2005 compared to 74,000 reported cases in 2004. In 2003, the PRC government reported more than 58,000 "major incidents of social unrest" involving an estimated 3 million to 10 million persons, of which 700, or less than 2%, involved clashes with police, while a Hong Kong-based labor rights group estimated that the number of labor demonstrations reached 300,000 that year. The December 2005 clash between villagers and People's Armed Police (PAP) in Dongzhou village (Shanwei city), southeastern Guangdong province, in which 3-20 villagers were killed, became a symbol of the depth of anger of those with grievances and the unpredictability of the outcomes of social disputes.

(Lum, 2006: 1-2)

Figure 8 is a stylized presentation based on Zhao (2008) which shows different forms and levels of political action as a function of the degree of

Figure 8 China: Typology of Political Actions



Source: Based on Zhao (2008: 767), Figure 26-1.

organization, of institutionalization/routinization and of targeted changes. The forms and manifestations might be different – from large-scale demonstrations of 1989 to the sporadic but frequent eruption of, often violent, public protests nowadays, including ethnoregional riots – but they all share a basic underlying element that the power that be might not be willing to recognize:

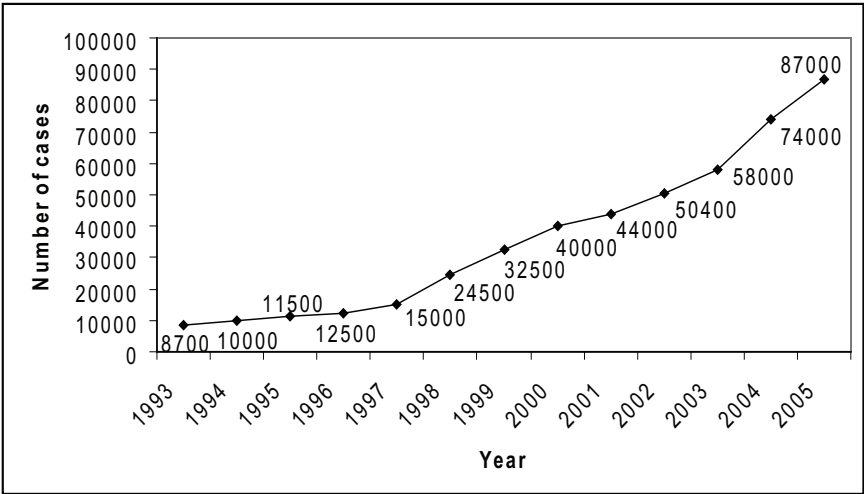
In any social order [...] there is always a strong element of dissension about the distribution of power and values. Hence [...] any institutional system is never fully homogeneous in the sense of being fully accepted or accepted to the same degree by all those participating in it [...] Thus “antisystems” may develop within any society. Although the antisystems often remain latent for long periods of time, they may also constitute, under propitious conditions, important foci of systematic change. The existence of such potential antisystems is evident in the existence in all societies of themes and orientations of protest.

(Eisenstadt, 1992: 417)

According to official statistics, “illegal” *qunti shijian* nationwide increased from 10,000 to 74,000 cases over the decade of 1994-2004, with an average annual growth rate of 22.2 per cent, while the number of people involved in the *qunti shijian* went up from 730,000 to 3,760,000, with an average annual growth rate of 17.8 per cent (Hu, Hu and Wang, 2006). The figures continued to climb to 87,000 cases and about 4 million people by 2005 (Figures 9 and 10). In general, the number of *qunti shijian* had been rising at an alarmingly increasing rate. From a growth of about 10 per cent from 1995 to 1996, *qunti shijian* was growing at an average annual rate of as high as 25.5 per cent from 1997 to 2004, i.e. higher than the average growth rate of 22.2 per cent during the decade of 1994-2004, with annual growth in certain years reaching as high as above 40 per cent; or with 1994 figure indexed 100, a steep increase of the index from 100 to 740 in terms of the number of cases during the decade of 1994-2004 (an increase of 6.4 times) and from 100 to 515 in terms of the number of people involved (an increase of 4.2 times) (*ibid.*). In terms of participants’ profiles, while at the beginning the people involved in these “mass incidents” were mainly *xiagang* 下岗 workers<sup>24</sup> and peasants (reflecting land loss and corruption issues) but later on the list of participants expanded to include, besides *xiagang* workers and peasants who lost their lands, also workers, urban residents, private individual enterprise owners (*getihu* 个体户), teachers, students and a small number of ex-servicemen and cadres, etc. (Hu, Hu, He and Guo, 2009: 143), thus reflecting expanding and deepening popular interest conflicts and contradictions.

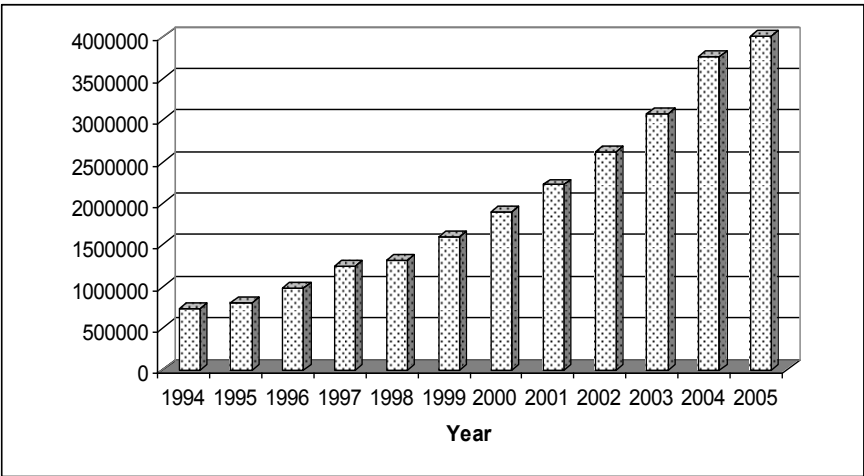


Figure 9 China: Incidents of Public Protest (*Qunti Shijian*)



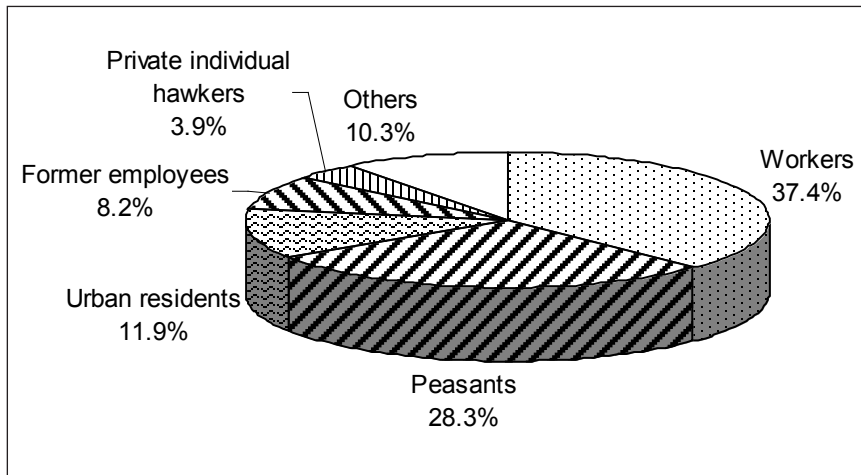
Source: Lum, 2006: 1-2; Tanner (2005), cited in Keidel (2005: 1), Table 1, data from *Liaowang* 瞭望 magazine and China Ministry of Public Security; Hu, Hu and Wang (2006).

Figure 10 China: Numbers of People Involved in Public Protests (*Qunti Shijian*)



Source: Hu, Hu and Wang (2006); 东方日报, 18th March 2009.

Figure 11 China: Participants of “Mass Incidents” (*Qunti Shijian*)



Note: Among “Workers”, one-third are workers of SOEs. “Others” includes a small number of ex-servicemen, teachers, students, cadres etc.

Source: Hu, Hu, He and Guo (2009: 143), Figure 3.2 (with data of 2001).

More recent cases of such public order disturbance were alarmingly on the rise in a series of serious incidents including year 2008’s high-profile conflicts of 28th June (in Guizhou), 5th July (Shaanxi), 10th July (Zhejiang), 17th July (Guangdong) and 19th July (Yunnan). Yet these constitute but just a small sample of the overall rise in social unrest across China in recent years, some of which involved ethnic conflicts<sup>25</sup>. Adding to these are the long-running Tibet conflicts including the March 2008 Lhasa riots and the March 2009 conflict in Qinghai’s Guoluo 果洛 Tibetan *zizhizhou* 自治州 (“autonomous prefecture”)<sup>26</sup>, as well as the July 2009 Ürümqi riots. With the memory of the 1989 tragedy constantly hanging like the sword of Damocles, the ruling regime is again facing a dire dilemma, as described by Tanner (2004):

[...] the struggle to control unrest will force Beijing’s leaders to face riskier dilemmas than at any time since the 1989 Tiananmen Square demonstrations. Experiments with less violent police tactics, economic concessions to demonstrators, and more fundamental institutional reforms all risk further encouraging protest in an increasingly restive society. Nevertheless, these challenges must be navigated if the party wants to avoid the ultimate dilemma of once again resorting to 1989-style violence or reluctantly engaging in a more fundamental renegotiation of power relations between the state and society.

(Tanner, 2004: 138)

The ruling CCP has not been oblivious to this deteriorating situation. Anti-corruption measures have continued to constitute a main prong in the Party's political reform since the Jiang Zemin 江泽民 administration, as Jiang himself declared in 2002 in his last political report to the National Congress, "If we do not crack down on corruption, the flesh-and-blood ties between the party and the people will suffer a lot and the party will be in danger of losing its ruling position, or possibly heading for self-destruction."<sup>27</sup> Having averted such a dire scenario for the Party in 1989 via a bloody crackdown, CCP was in full awareness of the root cause of the Tiananmen 天安门 protests. The predominantly Chinese squeaky clean, efficient tiny state of Singapore – and her long-ruling People's Action Party (PAP) – has quite incongruently become a role model for the CCP to emulate.<sup>28</sup> To the Western accusation that China's so-called "political reform" is nothing but a ruse since political reform in an authoritarian state should mean democratization and that China is copying a bad Singaporean model to develop its own version of neo-authoritarianism, combining free market economy with dissent-muzzling one-party rule, China's answer usually goes along the line like the West should recognize China's specific national conditions and give due respect before China could reach the Western standards in human rights and democracy. Whether the neo-authoritarian experience of the corruption-free tiny city state of Singapore could effectively be emulated by a huge country with one-fifth of humanity where corruption is endemic<sup>29</sup> has always been a centre of debate, given the fact that China's growing social unrest indeed reflects deep institutional problems of the evolving local State corporatism after 1989, as Minzner (2006: 9) observed:

Particularly at local levels of government, control over all formal political and legal institutions is centralized in the hands of the local Party secretary and a few deputies. These individuals exercise extensive control over institutions such as local legislatures, courts, Party disciplinary committees, and the media. This concentrated power in the hands of a few individuals breeds numerous problems. First, it allows corruption to thrive. Second, it allows local leaders to choke off the flow of information to higher-level leaders regarding policy failures that might reflect poorly on local officials' performance. Third, it deprives citizens of effective redress of their rights through local legal and political institutions, particularly when the source of the violation is a local Party official. Chinese citizens appear to be increasingly resorting to mass protests and petitions directed at higher-level authorities as a means of circumventing the controls of local officials over legal and political institutions, and triggering the intervention of higher level officials in resolving their grievances.

While the CCP regime has in the post-1989 era led the country to economic miracle and hence, in the eyes of many, has successfully reasserted its

legitimacy,<sup>30</sup> this reassertion of legitimacy and unassailability has in reality not been immune to series of challenges, some rather severe and unexpected, since 1989. Underlying these are various thorny issues that emerged both in spite of and due to the astounding economic success, one of which being socioeconomic stratification as well as ethnoregional disparity that have gone from bad to worse over these years.

### 3.3. Inequality, Poverty and Socioeconomic Stratification

Building upon the foundation set by the Hu-Zhao administration's audacious reformist programmes, Deng Xiaoping moved forward from where his purged former protégés have left by reinvigorating the post-Tiananmen chilling politico-economic milieu through his *nanxun* (南巡 / "southern tour") in 1992, culminating lately in China superseding Germany to become the world's third largest economy in early 2008, ranked only after the United States of America and Japan, and probably superseding Japan in mid-2010.<sup>31</sup> Also impressive was the country's poverty reduction achievements (see Table 1), with GDP per capita reaching today's US\$2,000. In fact, China's poor has dropped to about 14 million in 2007, compared to 250 million thirty years ago, according to the National Statistical Bureau of China, while average rural income has reached about 4100 yuan<sup>32</sup> in 2007 compared to just 136 yuan<sup>33</sup> at the beginning of economic reform.<sup>34</sup> While there has been underestimation<sup>35</sup> of the poor population, China's achievement in poverty reduction during the past three decades is still remarkable, even if the real poverty figure at present reaches a hundred million. Nevertheless, according

Table 1 China: Rural Poverty

	Year	1978	2006
Rural absolute poverty		250 million	21.48 million
Incidence of poverty		30.7%	2.3%
	Year	2000	2006
Low-income population <sup>+</sup>		62.13 million	35.5 million
Proportion of low-income population in rural population <sup>‡</sup>		6.7%	3.7%

<sup>+</sup> In 2006, the rural net income per capita of nationally designated focal poverty assistant counties reached 1,928 yuan.

<sup>‡</sup> In 2006, the rural absolute poor plus rural low-income population reached 13.7% of total rural population in the Western Region.

Source: Data from Fan (2008: 14-19).

to a report released in March 2009 by Beijing's Ministry of Finance, the country's Gini coefficient which had leapt from 0.282 in 1991 to 0.456 in 1998 had further increased to 0.457 in 1999 and 0.458 in 2000, with more than 50 per cent of the national income in the hands of the richest 20 per cent of the population and only 2 to 4 per cent of the national income in the hands of the poorest 20 per cent.<sup>36</sup> Table 2 shows that China's provinces/zizhiqu/zhixiashi whose Gini coefficients ( $G_i$ ) are higher than the national figure ( $G$ ) of 0.45 totaled 11, i.e. about 35.5 per cent of all provinces/zizhiqu/zhixiashi.

Table 2 China: Comparison of Provincial Gini ( $G_i$ ) and National Gini ( $G$ )\*

$G_i < G$	$G_i \geq G$ (higher by)
<i>Eastern Region</i>	
Beijing 北京 zhixiashi	Fujian 福建 (1%-10%)
Hebei 河北	Guangdong 广东 (1%-10%)
Shandong 山东	Hainan 海南 (1%-10%)
Shanghai 上海 zhixiashi	Jiangsu 江苏 (10%-15%)
Tianjin 天津 zhixiashi	Liaoning 辽宁 (1%-10%)
	Zhejiang 浙江 (15%-29%)
<i>Central Region</i>	
Heilongjiang 黑龙江	Anhui 安徽 (1%-10%)
Henan 河南	Jilin 吉林 (1%-10%)
Hubei 湖北	
Hunan 湖南	
Jiangxi 江西	
Shanxi 山西	
<i>Western Region</i>	
Chongqing 重庆 zhixiashi	Ningxia 宁夏 Hui zizhiqu (10%-15%)
Gansu 甘肃	Qinghai 青海 (1%-10%)
Guangxi 广西 Zhuang zizhiqu	Sichuan 四川 (1%-10%)
Guizhou 贵州	
Inner Mongolia / Nei Monggol 内蒙古	
Mongol zizhiqu	
Shaanxi 陕西	
Tibet / Xizang 西藏 Tibetan zizhiqu	
Xinjiang 新疆 Uygur zizhiqu	
Yunnan 云南	

\*  $G = 0.45$

Source: Huang and Niu (2007: 161-162), Table 5-3(2), with data of 2003.

The poor zizhiqu of Tibet was rather egalitarian, with Gini lower than 0.3. Other provinces/zhixiashi with reasonable levels of 0.3-0.4 were Shandong, Jiangxi, Hubei, Guizhou and Chongqing. The majority of provinces/zizhiqu/zhixiashi, totaled 23, had Gini levels between 0.4 and 0.5, showing the inclination towards widening gap between rich and poor. Two provinces, the economically advanced Jiangsu and Zhejiang, had Gini greater than 0.5 (Huang and Niu, 2007: 162).

The following account in a sense captures the essence of the problem:

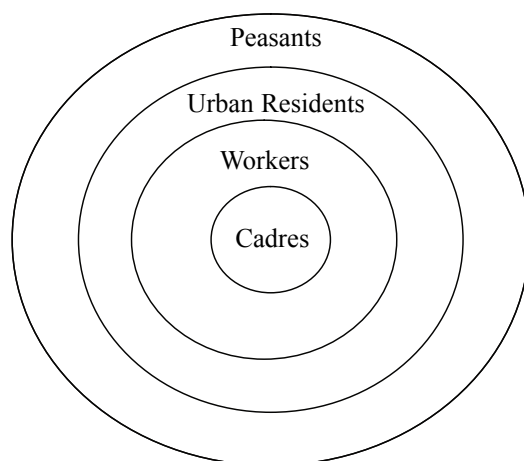
China is a profoundly polarised society, with hundreds of millions of impoverished workers and peasants at one pole, and a tiny capitalist elite at the other. According to a Boston Consulting Group study, China had 250,000 millionaire households in 2005, ranking the country sixth in the world. These households accounted for only 0.4 percent of the total, but controlled 70 percent of national wealth.

Chan (2007)

In addition, it was also alleged that almost 60 per cent of public revenue was used for the benefit of the 70 million-strong community of CCP cadres and apparatchiks who enjoyed a level of welfare – including healthcare, education and career opportunities – greatly higher than the ordinary citizens, and among the rich with wealth worth a hundred million yuan and above, 91 per cent or 2932 were the children of high-ranking CCP cadres and apparatchiks, possessing assets above 2.045 trillion yuan.<sup>37</sup>

The fact that 70 per cent of China's wealth was in the hand of 0.4 per cent of the people was confirmed by Cai Jiming 蔡继明, a Chinese People's Political Consultative Committee member, on the 6th Meeting of the 11th Standing Committee of the CPPCC, referring to an authoritative government department report.<sup>38</sup> Cai emphasized that with 0.4 per cent of the people in control of 70 per cent of wealth, China's wealth concentration was higher than that of the US. Proposing income tax and inheritance tax reforms, Cai emphasized that such wealth concentration in the hands of a minority of people has led to inadequate consumption and even distorted consumption. In fact, a recent report revealed that with luxury goods consumption reaching US\$8.6 billion, i.e. 25 per cent of the world market, China superseded US to become the world's second largest luxury goods market by January 2009, ranked only after Japan.<sup>39</sup> Other data show that the degree of wealth concentration towards the rich in China is presently growing on average at an annual rate of 12.3 per cent which is double the world average growth rate. Such tendency is also reflected in sad state of the small and medium enterprises, with data showing the disappearance of 7,700,000 private businesses over the decade of 1994-2004 and the collapse of the middle class leading to an M-shape society.<sup>40</sup>

Figure 12 China: Identity Circles



Source: Zhu (2007: 6), Figure 1-1.

Regarding social stratification, Zhu (2007: 6-7) observed the existence in China of an enormous set of “identity circles” encompassing the whole society (Figure 12) – “agricultural population” circle, “urban residents” circle, “workers” circle, “cadres” circle<sup>41</sup>:

- 1) Agricultural population: Those born into peasant families who have by informal procedure moved into other circles, even if having entered other classes or strata by work change or even having left the village the whole life, are still only considered peasants.
- 2) Urban residents: Broadly speaking, all non-peasants belong to this group of “urban residents”. Formerly, “urban residents” narrowly defined refer to unemployed personnel – those without a fixed job. As “urban people”, they had a status higher than peasants, but as people without work units, their status was below “workers”. If they were formally employed by the labour department, even if they did work, they were just “temporary workers”. This community of “temporary workers” no longer exists since the 1990s, but the concept is still alive in people’s subconsciousness.
- 3) Workers: All workers in accordance with whether they are managed by the government’s labour department or personnel department are divided into the “workers” and “cadres” sub-circles.
- 4) Cadres: From this sub-circle a further division can be made into “general cadres” and “leadership cadres”. Civil organizations in China, schools, and even public enterprises and their personnel are all subject to the so-called “administrative stratification”<sup>42</sup>.

Table 3 China: Official Social Stratification, 1880s

Class	Number of households	%
Literati and officialdom ( <i>Shi</i> 士)	1,500,000	2
Agriculture ( <i>Nong</i> 農)	56,000,000	80
Industry and commerce ( <i>Gong shang</i> 工商)	12,500,000	18
Total	70,000,000*	100

\* Total population around 350-400 million.

Source: Li (2008b: 33), Table 2-2 (original source: Marsh, 1980: 15).

Members of the society are unable to completely follow their own will in moving across these four circles between which exist different economic and political conditions. Hence, between these four circles there exists a high-low relationship – in other words, this is not a multidimensional but a centripetal structure; moving towards the centre implies the raising of one's social status.

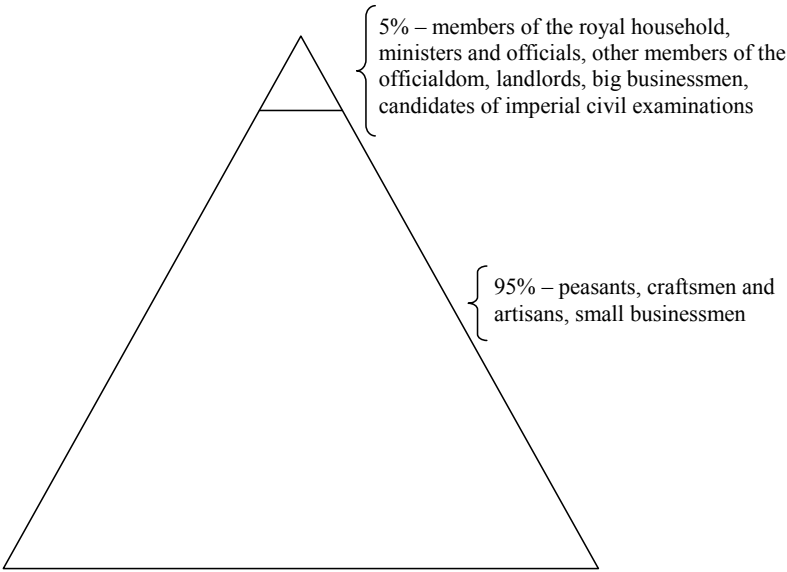
Social stratification can indeed be traced back to the dawn of the Chinese civilization. From the Qin (Ch'in 秦) Dynasty to the Qing (Ch'ing 清) Dynasty (221 BC – AD 1911), the imperial courts had always divided the Chinese populace into four strata – literati and officialdom (*shi* 士), agriculture (*nong* 農), labour/craftsmen (*gong* 工) and merchants/businessmen (*shang* 商), with both landlords and peasants included in the category of “nong” as the two major strata, followed by the two secondary strata of “gong” and “shang” (Table 3) – between which did exist a certain level of vertical mobility (Li, 2008b: 32-33).

Nevertheless, the traditional official categorization contains its own contradictions by grouping together landlords and peasants under “nong” and the upper-class big businessmen/merchants and the lower-class petty businessmen together under “shang”, and separating officials and literati from the landlord class where they actually belong to (ibid.: 33). A clearer treatment of stratification is shown in Figure 13.

Tremendous transformation came with the Communist revolution, and by 1958 emerged a new structure of social stratification with the disappearance of the landlord class and the national bourgeoisie, and replacing them was the new upper class: the cadres – and as in the past, the huge peasant masses remained the country's lower class (Li, 2008b: 50, see Figure 14). Moving into the 2000s Chinese social stratification has witnessed three major transformations – a third of the peasants are now the *nongmingong* 农民工 (rural-to-urban migrant labour)<sup>43</sup> whose total number is almost equal to that of the urban workers; urban non-SOE workers have greatly surpassed the

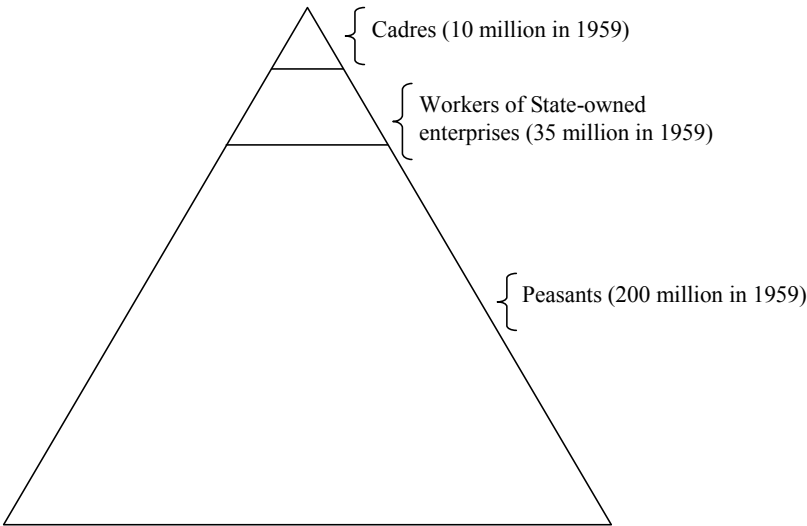


Figure 13 China: Social Stratification in Late Qing (Ch'ing) Dynasty



Source: Li (2008b: 33), Figure 2-1 (original source: *The Cambridge History of China*, Vol. 13, p. 30).

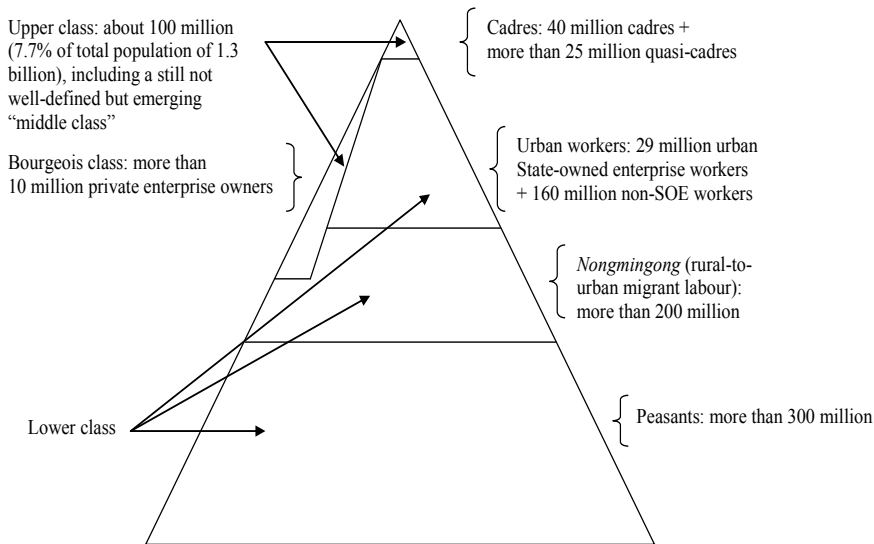
Figure 14 China: Social Stratification, 1959-1979



Source: Li (2008b: 51), Figure 3-1.

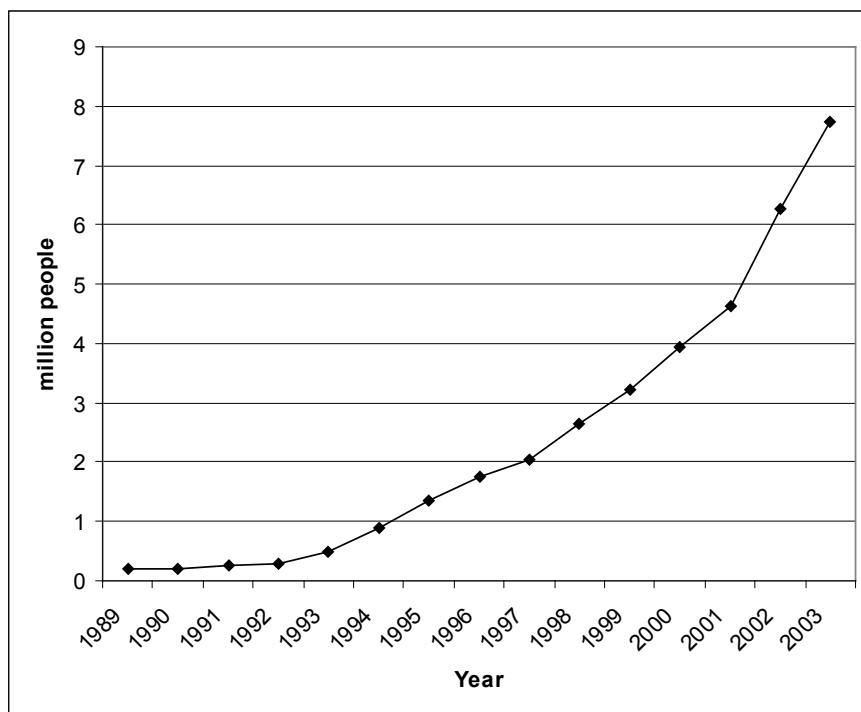
SOE workers in number as the number of SOE workers has declined rapidly after 1997; rapid increase in the number of China's reborn bourgeoisie (*ibid.*: 176, see Figure 15). Disagreeing with the underestimated official 2003 figure of 7.73 million who were owners of private enterprises (see Figure 16), Li (2008b: 188) estimated the total number constituting the Chinese bourgeois class (though still represented a small segment between cadres and SOE workers) to be from 10 to 15 million, including four categories missed out in the official statistics: the large number of managerial personnel and local cadres who virtually turned into enterprise owners due to privatization of almost all village and township enterprises within two to three years after 1998; the many cadres of the large number of small- and medium-scale SOEs and even a certain number of large SOEs which were privatized after 1997 who became the new owners of these enterprises; with the majority of large SOEs turning into joint-stock companies in the last decade, the large number of administrative personnel in these enterprises and some civil servants who were involved in regulating and administering the process of these SOEs turning into joint-stock companies had acquired huge volume of shares; unknown number of government officials who, having legally or illegally accumulated substantial volumes of wealth, invested the money in the share markets or saved it in local and overseas banks. Summing up the savings and interests, gains in stocks and shares and other non-salary incomes of these

Figure 15 China: Social Stratification, Present



Source: Li (2008b: 176), Figure 8-1 and pp. 177-194.

Figure 16 China: Resurgence of Bourgeois Class since 1989

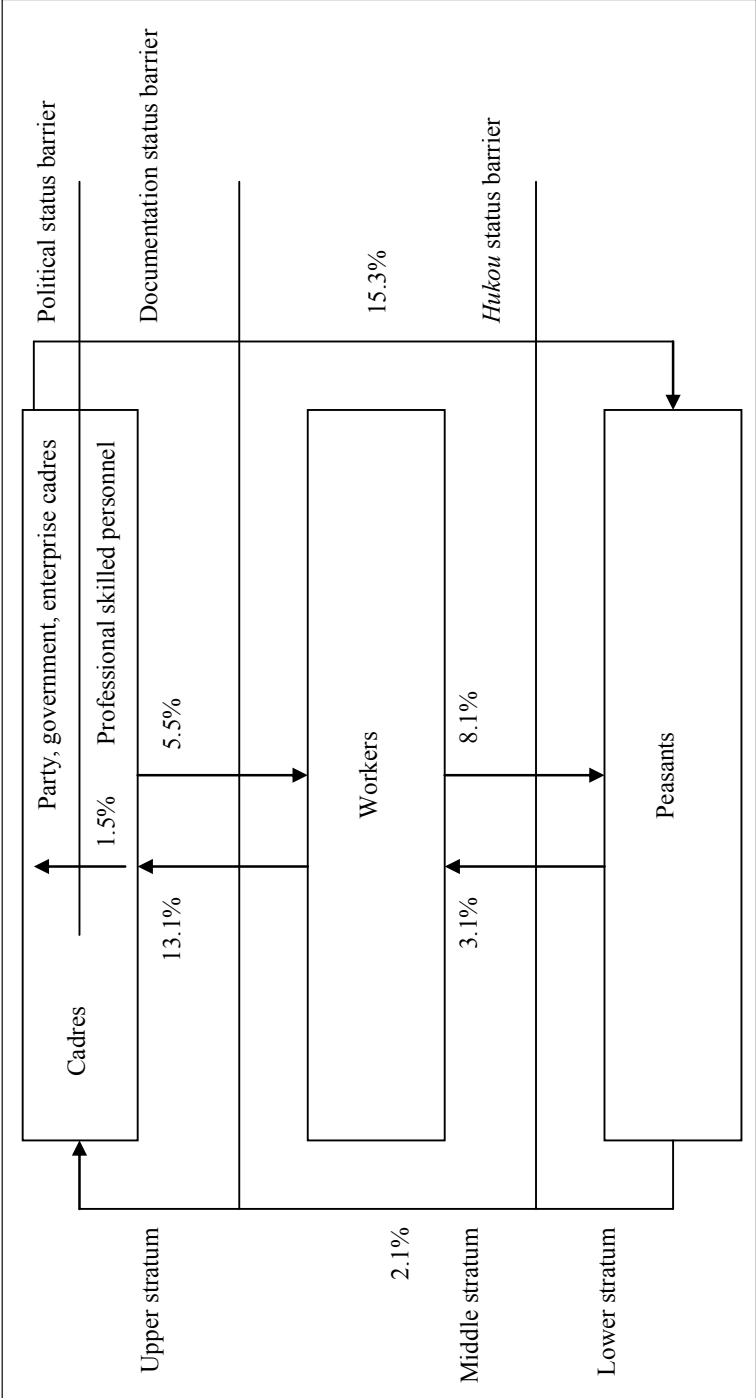


Source: Li (2008b: 187), Figure 8-3.

four categories of people would give amounts apparently higher than their wages and salaries (*ibid.*).

An interesting question is that regarding China's illusive "middle class". The approach in Li's model as shown in Figure 15 is, citing Gilbert (2003: 17), not to identify the Chinese "middle class" before China enters the stage of late industrialization or post-industrialization, as the majority of the Chinese white-collar service-sector professionals are part of the upper classes of the cadres and the reborn bourgeoisie. The speed with which this presently illusive class is going to emerge unequivocally in the changing class pyramid depends of course on the dynamics of social mobility in the long process of modern Chinese industrialization. The impacts of China's economic reform in the post-Mao period especially since the critical juncture of 1989 (a catalyst that led to Deng Xiaoping's reaffirmation of the path of reform in his *nanxun* in 1992) on social mobility have been tremendous, and their significance is outstanding especially in view of the barriers that existed just before the reforms began (Figure 17) – the *hukou* 户口/*huji* 户籍 system, administrative

Figure 17 China: Channels of Social Mobility and Barriers before Economic Reform (Intragenerational Mobility)



Notes: Arrows represent the directions of mobility, percentages are rates of mobility.  
Source: Li (2008a: 497), Figure 17-1.

documentation system and political status (ideological) barrier. The *hukou* barrier is the most insurmountable, and only a slim 5.2 per cent of peasants managed to cross this barrier during the 1940-1979 period (compared to the 13.1 per cent of workers who managed to move up into the cadre stratum), with 3.1 per cent becoming workers and 2.1 per cent becoming cadres (Li, 2008a: 497). Within the cadre stratum, political (ideological loyalty) barrier had blocked professional skilled personnel (who were thus marginalized and unstable within the cadre community) from moving upward into the organizational/enterprise cadre community, with only a slim 1.5 per cent passed the severe political scrutiny to advance into the latter (*ibid.*: 498). On the other hand, during this pre-reform period there also existed downward mobility which could be explained by the temporary changing of status due to university enrolment and military service etc. as well as specific political policy changes and various political campaigns (*ibid.*: 498-499). Table 4 shows in general an apparent increase in social mobility coming along with economic reform and increased openness of the Chinese society, while the probably rather unique existence of increased downward mobility alongside the usual increased upward mobility resulted from industrialization could in a way reflect the simultaneous “dual transformation” consisting of industrialization and institutional change (drastic reforms in the economic institution) (*ibid.*: 501-502). All these manifestations of social mobility since economic reform began have resulted in the present overall structure of social stratification whose details could be illustrated as in Figure 18.

#### 4. Sociopolitical Change and Its Impact on Chinese Social Dilemmas: Contexts, Institutions, Agents and Events

Figure 19, based on Green (2008), shows that the process of social change typically involves a combination of four different components: context (the environment within which changes take place, thus crucial in determining the nature and direction of change), institutions (the organizations and rules, both formal and informal, that establish the “rules of the game” governing the behaviour of agents – including culture, family structure, civil service, private sector, governmental system, patron-client network, etc.), agents (organizations and individuals actively involved in promoting or blocking change, e.g. ruling party, social movements, political and business élite, military and police, inspirational leaders, social entrepreneurs) and events (one-off events triggering wider change and being key catalysts to social and political changes, e.g. wars, pandemics like AIDS, SARS, A(H1N1), civil conflicts such as “mass incidents”, ethnic or ethnoregional riots, demonstrations and crackdowns, natural disasters, economic crisis) and, as Eisenstadt noted:

Table 4 China: Intergenerational and Intragenerational Mobility Rate (%)

	Intergenerational Mobility		
	Total	Pre-1980 Employee	Post-1980 Employee
Immobility	51.7	58.6	46.0
Total Mobility	48.3	41.4	54.0
Upward Mobility	37.0	32.4	40.9
Downward Mobility	11.3	9.1	13.1

	Intragenerational Mobility (first employment – present employment)		
	Total	Pre-1980 Employee	Post-1980 Employee
Immobility	63.2	64.7	61.8
Total Mobility	36.8	35.3	38.2
Upward Mobility	23.2	23.8	22.6
Downward Mobility	13.6	11.5	15.6

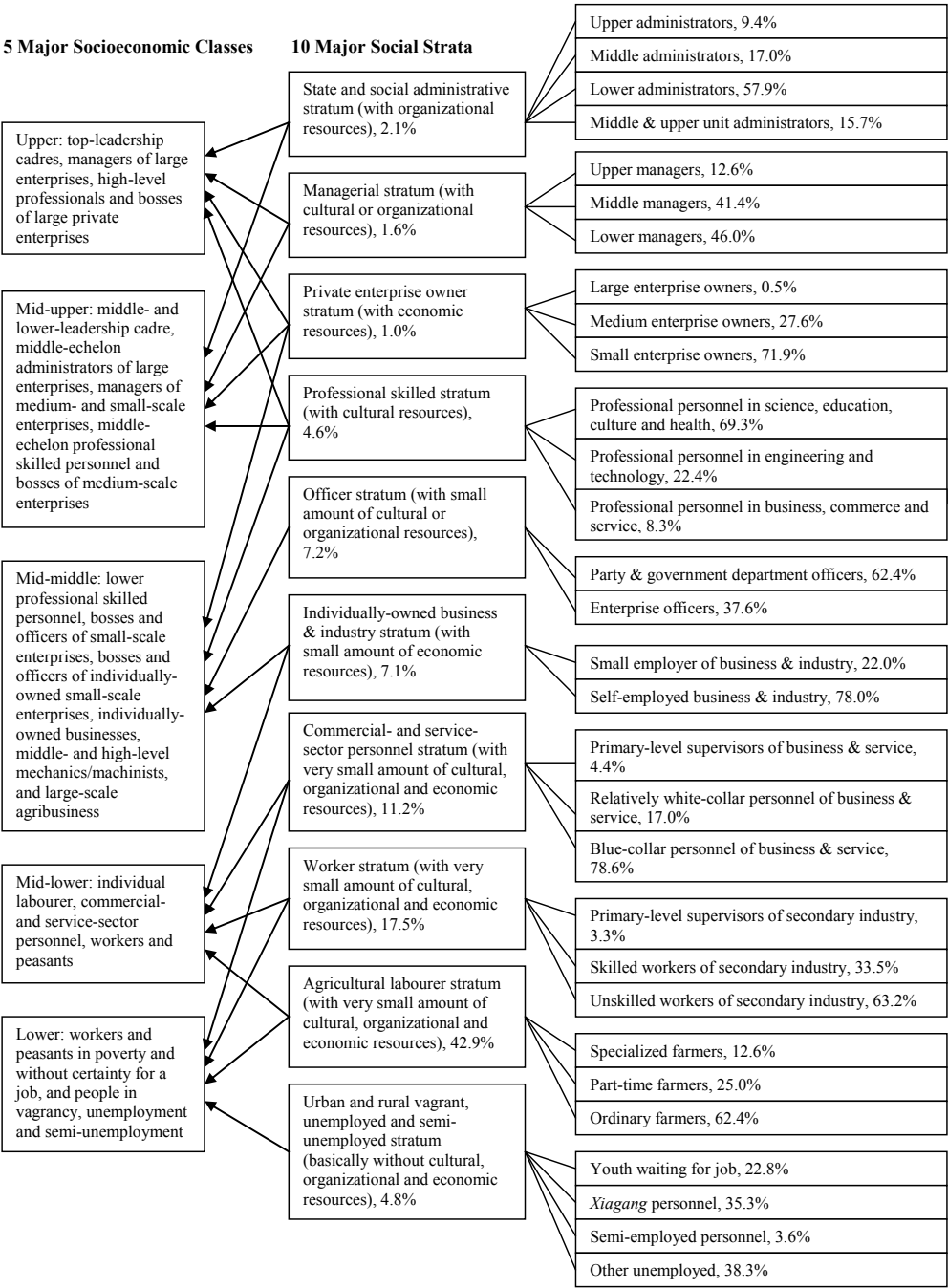
  

	Intragenerational Mobility (previous employment – present employment)			
	Total	Change of job 1949-1979	Change of job 1980-1989	Change of job 1999-2001
Immobility	63.7	86.7	69.8	45.8
Total Mobility	36.3	13.3	30.2	54.2
Upward Mobility	20.9	7.4	18.7	30.5
Downward Mobility	15.5	5.9	11.5	23.6

Note: Intergenerational mobility refers to status change from father's employment (or stratum) to son/daughter's employment (or stratum); intragenerational mobility refers to status change of an individual's employment (or stratum). Total mobility rate refers to the percentage of intergenerational or intragenerational change in stratum or employment status, while immobility rate refers to percentage where such change never occurs. Upward mobility rate refers to percentage where such change is from a lower stratum to a higher stratum, while downward mobility rate refers to percentage where such change is from a higher stratum to a lower stratum. Total mobility is the sum of upward mobility rate and downward mobility rate, and total mobility rate plus immobility rate equals 100%. "First employment" refers to the earliest job, "present employment" refers to the current job, and "previous employment" refers to the job immediately precedes the current job.

Source: Li (2008a: 501), Table 17-1.

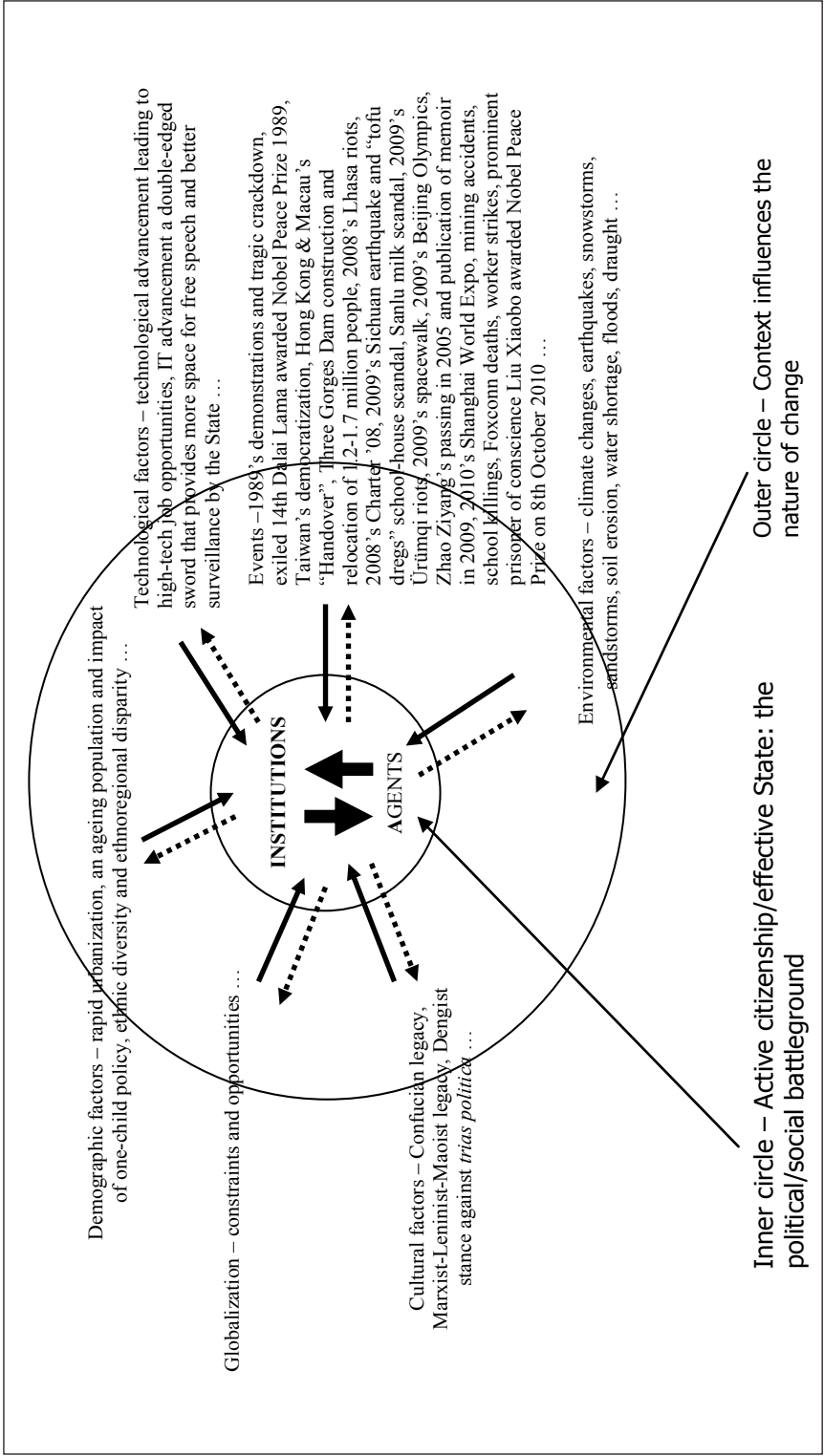
Figure 18 China: Present Structure of Social Stratification



Note: Arrow indicates that the whole or a part of a social stratum concerned can be included in one of the five major social classes.

Sources: Han (2009: 127), Figure 9.1; Li and Chen (2004: 13), Figure 1-3.

Figure 19 Chinese Social Change: Green's Institution-Agent-Event-Context Interface



Source: Based on Green (2008).



[... any] setting of social interaction, but particularly the macrosocietal order, involves a plurality of actors – elites, movements, and groups – with different levels of control over natural and social resources. These elites continuously struggle over the control, ownership, and the possibility of using such resources, generating ubiquitous conflicts on all levels of social interaction.

(Eisenstadt, 1992: 416)

The categories listed in Figure 19 may, however, overlap, e.g. the CCP is both an institution and agent in blocking or promoting different kinds of changes. The inner circle of the diagram consists of active citizens as agents and the effective State – the CCP’s Party-State – as the most important institution, in terms of change components. This inner circle is surrounded by an outer circle of context consisting of wider components of change which in a way are less susceptible to political or public action, such as events. While the contextual factors (outer circle) are having an immediate and crucial impact – as shown in the diagram by the inter-circle solid arrows – on the institutions and agents of change, these institutions and agents are also having certain, though limited, control – shown by the dotted arrows – over these contextual factors. Originally constructed to understand the constraints and possibilities for building active citizenship and an effective, accountable State (ACES), this model would need to accommodate additional complexities of the unique environment of China’s combination of economic liberalization and one-party political authoritarianism.

#### **4.1. Critical Junctures**

[...] while I recognize the dangers to truth of relating scholarship to life, I also believe that we who live by the pen bear some measure of obligation, however tenuous, to those who die by the sword.

Alan Wood (1995: xiii)

Hage, Hanneman and Gargan (1989: 89-91) remarked that theories of the determinants of public spending should not only be problem specific but also period specific. The historical dimension – the timing of State<sup>44</sup> involvement – is a crucial factor.<sup>45</sup> Levi-Strauss (1967: 281-3) perceived time not solely in mechanical, cumulative or statistical terms, but also in social terms – deriving its properties from concrete social phenomena. Complementing his view of ethnicity as a special case of stratification, an analytical perspective concerned with conflict and power (the Weberian approach), Katznelson (1971: 69-70) emphasized the importance of the notion of “critical structural periods” – historical periods when “critical structural decisions” are made. Citing Schattschneider’s remark that “organization is the mobilization of bias” (1961: 71), Katznelson noted that critical structural decisions are those that define the

“structured relationships” which not only limit but also shape the direction of behavioural choice. In other words, *social time* rather than *historical time*, which can be misleading, is the crucial variable.<sup>46</sup>

Traditional Chinese mystical beliefs see great natural calamities as omens of tumultuous dynastic changes. Probably one of the deadliest wraths of nature in modern times – the official death toll stood at around 242,000, one third of some unofficial estimates – the Tangshan 唐山 earthquake on 28th July, in an ominous turn of events during the “Curse of 1976”, was preceded by the death of Zhou Enlai (Chou En-lai 周恩来)<sup>47</sup> on 8th January and that of Zhu De (Chu Teh 朱德) on 6th July, and followed by Mao Zedong (Mao Tse-tung 毛泽东)’s passing on 9th September that brought his ten-year Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution (*wuchan jieji wenhua da geming* 无产阶级文化大革命) to a close. The so-called Gang of Four (*si ren bang* 四人帮), led by Mao’s widow Jiang Qing (Chiang Ch’ing 江青), were arrested on 6th October in what amounted to a palace coup, paving the way for the return of the twice-purged pragmatist and reformist Deng Xiaoping (Teng Hsiao-p’ing 邓小平) to the government and party in the following year, who was to deal the *coup de grâce* to Mao’s failed autarkic collectivist utopia.

Deng Xiaoping’s return to power signalled China’s entry into a new age, with his pragmatism paving the way for the rise of Hu Yaobang 胡耀邦 and Zhao Ziyang 赵紫阳 whom Deng entrusted to plan and implement China’s market-oriented economic reforms from 1980 to 1989. These reforms were nothing less than revolutionary, whose origin could be traced to Zhao’s successful experimental reforms – during which Zhao laid the foundation of his key reform framework of the coming years<sup>48</sup> – from 1978 in Sichuan, where Zhao was the Party’s First Secretary, before Hu and Zhao entered the politburo respectively in 1978 and 1979 and the Standing Committee in 1980 when Hu was appointed the Secretary General and Zhao later the Deputy Premier and then Premier (Bao, 2009: 28-29). In terms of political culture and atmosphere, this was also a period of limited political liberalization, an aspect of reform where the tug-of-war between the reformist and conservative forces was particularly acute, which eventually led to the downfall of, in turn, first Hu in January 1987, then Zhao in June 1989, when they overstepped the mark into the minefield of “bourgeois liberalization” where Deng who sanctioned full-scale economic reform was not prepared to bring China into.

Exiled dissidents estimated the number of civilians, workers and students killed in the crackdown during the night of 3rd-4th June 1989 to be from 2000 to 3000<sup>49</sup>, while the official death toll stood at four hundred and forty-three, 223 of whom were soldiers and police officers, plus 5000 soldiers and police officers and 2000 civilians wounded in the crackdown (Hutton, 2006: 27)<sup>50</sup>. The Tiananmen demonstrations had ended in a tragic crackdown and arrested the maturing of the political system with the purge of Zhao Ziyang

and the arrest and exile of many chief reformists and intellectuals. Aspects of political reform have since either been rolled back or stalled. In view of the close link between political decentralization and democratization,<sup>51</sup> the tragic end of the Tiananmen protests and democracy movement of June 1989 has left an inefaceable shadow over democratic pluralist development and ethnoregional accommodation. The post-1989 robust, even miraculous, economic growth has been used time and again rather successfully by the CCP for the *ex post* justification of the Tiananmen crackdown of 1989, that the brutal crackdown had been necessary to preserve China's stability and economic progress, but the continuing, even recently escalating, social unrest – including those more alarming incidents with ethnic or ethnoregional flavour – that culminated in Xinjiang's July Fifth deadly riots of 2009, just a month past the 20th anniversary of the 1989 tragedy, points to the need to objectively and critically examine the underlying contradictions amidst the euphoria of economic success.<sup>52</sup>

#### **4.2. Path Dependency of Political Change**

The 1989 crackdown could be seen as a wake-up call for the CCP to embark rigorously on a path of continuing economic reform while rolling back the Hu-Zhao era of limited politico-cultural liberalization and the subsequent collapse of Communist Party-rule in USSR and Eastern Europe from the end of 1989 to early 1990<sup>53</sup> had seemed to reaffirm the correctness of such decision to crack down on the part of the CCP to ensure the survival of its one-party rule. The 1989 tragedy could also be seen as a catalyst for the single-minded determination to deliver on the economic front after Deng Xiaoping's *nanxun* later in 1992 to reaffirm the Party's policy of moving forward with economic reform and liberalization, coupled with more determined approach in dealing with political dissent.

There is indeed little unique for a politically authoritarian country to achieve economic miracles. Many authoritarian and neo-authoritarian countries have done it before, such as Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石's Taiwan and Park Chung-hee 박정희 / 朴正熙's South Korea, or in a way even Augusto Pinochet's Chile and Soeharto's Indonesia. In fact, many such countries are among the models CCP's China, in its search for a way forward after 1989, found attractive to consider for emulation. Like May Fourth of 1919 which, while inclusive of the liberal tradition, eventually turned Chinese intellectuals away from Western liberalism to Bolshevism, planted the seeds of Mao's ascending the Tiananmen on 1st October 1949<sup>54</sup> and of the contradictions between national rejuvenation, modernization and radicalism, the 1989 events and tragedy in a way also sowed the seeds of escalating internal contradictions and tension in subsequent policy orientation which was

reflected in the determined effort in economic reform while resisting the tide of political “bourgeois liberalization” and ruling out the adoption of multi-party democracy. Even not seen in ethnic and ethnoterritorial terms, such social contradictions have manifested themselves in the alarmingly widening income gap, deteriorating socioeconomic inequalities and proliferating social unrest, as discussed in the previous section.

CCP’s China has been adamant that each country has the right to choose her own path to development and the sanctity of national sovereignty must at all costs be protected from foreign intervention<sup>55</sup> – a position largely supported by most developing countries including most ASEAN members. While steering the country towards the status of an economic superpower, with the inevitable concomitant expansion in political and military might and prowess, the CCP, building on the foundations set by the former Hu-Zhao administration<sup>56</sup> under Deng’s auspices, also embarked on a remarkable process of internal reform and rejuvenation. Many of these internal reforms have involved power succession or leadership transition which has been remarkably successful over the years and has definitely played a crucial role in maintaining intra-Party political stability and smoothing the path of economic reform and transition. These basically involve ideology restructuring, recruitment of new breed of élite into the leadership, construction of “political exit” channel for ageing leaders and grooming of the core of future generation of leadership (see, e.g. Zheng and Lye, 2004), which is of course part and parcel of the “stick and carrot” approach in the co-optation and control of intellectuals. Besides, Beijing has also been emphasizing the democratization of rural governance since the National People’s Congress passed the “Village Committee Organic Law of the PRC (Experimental)” in 1987 that introduced the direct election of the directors, deputy directors and members of the villagers’ committees. At least theoretically, these grassroots government officials, being elected by the local people, could be more independent in their dealings with the higher authorities since their political legitimacy depends on popular votes rather than appointment by higher authorities (Zheng and Lye, 2004). The recent years saw the geographical expansion of such villagers’ committee elections, with 929 counties across China covering Tianjin, Hebei, Shanxi, Inner Mongolia, Fujian, Jiangxi and Shaanxi holding such elections in the year 2003 (*ibid.*).<sup>57</sup> Nevertheless, such village committee elections should not be taken as a sign that China is taking the first step in political reform moving towards multiparty liberal democracy. In fact, the country’s leadership has never made any pretension that this is so. In the sixfold typology of regime classification of Diamond (2002), China is classified as “politically closed authoritarian”. When describing the Franquist regime as “authoritarian”, Gunther (1980: 2) elaborated, “It was based upon the explicit rejection of mass suffrage as a means of elite recruitment and a

basis of legitimacy [...] The concept of political conflict among social groups was formally regarded as illegitimate, and mass organizations which engaged in what the state regarded as conflictual political activities were vigorously suppressed.” It is interesting to compare this with the case of post-1989 China. While many authors inside and outside China have been lauding the country’s “grassroots democratization” and intra-Party reforms as pointing to a promising path of de-authoritarian evolvement, the perception that China is moving out from this “politically closed authoritarian” category of regime type could prove to be as misleadingly whimsical as it is empirical unfounded. Furthermore, past record of mismanagement and repressive, often violent, response to dissent, including the excesses during the Cultural Revolution both in China proper and in ethnic regions like Tibet and Xinjiang, and the 1989 tragedy, may not be encouraging for many, including the ethnoregional minority nationalities.

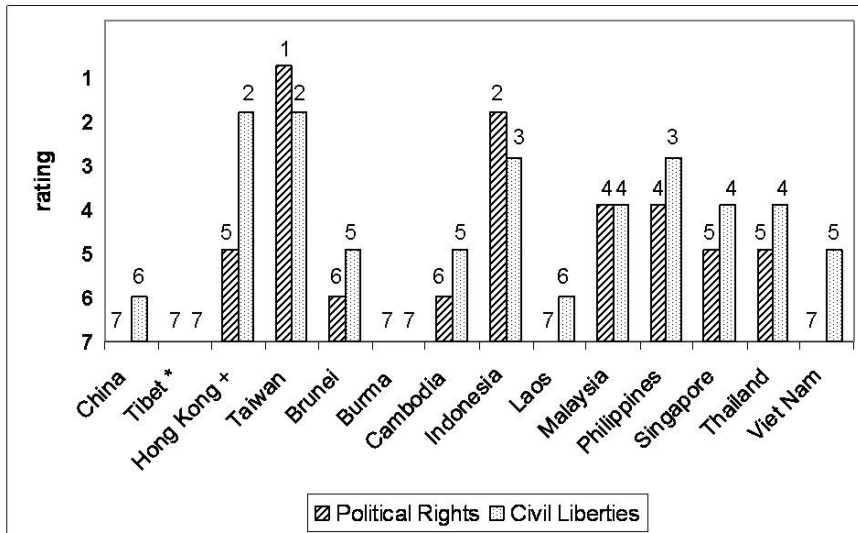
Indeed, while promoting the rural elections in 1987, Peng Zhen 彭真 had argued that such elections could be used to help the Chinese Communist Party govern the country’s rural areas and perpetuate the Party’s rule (Zheng and Lye, 2004). Any perception that such electoral initiatives are implying that the Party is loosening its stranglehold over China’s politics could be illusory as the signals conveyed by the ruling regime regarding the tolerance threshold for dissent remain unmistakable, not least highlighted in recent years by the arrest and jailing of various civil rights lawyers, researchers, journalists, activists and other dissidents which represent another reference point for reading civil rights development in China. Besides these high-profile cases, there are also many other little observed arrests and imprisonments that rarely raise an eyebrow beyond the border. According to the advocacy group Reporters Sans Frontiers (Reporters without Borders), there are more journalists in prison in China than anywhere else in the world.<sup>58</sup> A report of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) at the end of January 2009 accused China of reneging on her promise of press freedom during her bid for hosting the Olympics and called for the country to immediately release imprisoned journalists and halt the repression of journalists with the current national security and other laws – and this came amidst reports that a new series of rules and regulations would be launched in 2009 to strengthen the control on journalists and news reporting ostensibly for maintaining quality and authenticity in news reporting.<sup>59</sup> Reporters Sans Frontiers ranked China number 167 out of a total of 173 countries in its 2008 Worldwide Press Freedom Index and considered the number of arrests and cases of news surveillance and control by China’s political police and Department of Propaganda to be still very high, while Human Rights Watch asserted that China’s extensive police and State security apparatus continued to impose upon civil society activists, critics and protestors multiple layers of controls

(Lye, 2009: 215, 237) and the crackdown on dissent – whether the targets be civil rights activists, campaigners for multi-party political reform or *falungong* 法轮功 followers – has remained relentless. In terms of international perception of civil and political rights, in the 2010 Freedom House’s Annual Global Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties (ratings reflect events from 1st January 2009, through 31st December 2009), China was rated 7 on political rights and 6 on civil liberties (Figure 20).<sup>60</sup>

Despite the much touted intra-Party and grassroots democratization, it is undeniable that at the moment China remains an authoritarian state, with party regulations on cadre selection still charging “local Party committees with nominating key officials in local governments, legislatures, and courts” (Minzner, 2006: 10):

Local Party committee control extends over the electoral systems that permit citizen participation in the selection of delegates to local people’s congresses and village/residents committees. Selection of who may serve as a candidate is under the control of local election committees dominated, and sometimes chaired, by county and township Party secretaries. Election committees use

Figure 20 International Perception of Political Rights and Civil Liberties: Mainland China, Taiwan and ASEAN, 2009



Notes: 1 is the best rating, 7 the worst. Ratings reflect events from 1st January 2009, through 31st December 2009.

\* Xizang (Tibet) Zizhiqu (“autonomous region”), China.

+ Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR), China.

Source: Data from Freedom House (2010).

non-transparent practices to narrow the list of acceptable candidates [...] Citizens who attempt to challenge Party-nominated candidates can find themselves unable to even get on the ballot. Chinese officials do permit a degree of citizen political participation, but only within channels that local Party institutions can control and monitor. Some non-Party members do win seats on local village committees. “Consultative” channels, such as the Chinese People’s Consultative Conference, allow non-Party members to offer nonbinding input into policy formulation. Chinese authorities have also recently experimented with allowing citizen participation in the selection of local Party officials. These experiments, however, grant citizens only a limited voice in the nomination of potential candidates, allow Party committees to eliminate names from the nominee lists, and retain Party control over the final approval of the results.

(*ibid.*: 10-11)

O’Donnell and Schmitter (1986: 9) opined that a transition from authoritarian rule could produce a democracy, but it could also terminate with a liberalized authoritarian regime (*dictablanda*) or a restrictive, illiberal democracy (*democradura*).<sup>61</sup> As the above discussion shows, while shadows of the remnants of her ghostly past still linger to haunt the one-party State, there are already telling signs that the continuing transformation from a *dictadura* (dictatorship) into a *dictablanda* leading further to a highly restrictive *democradura* in the near future is the most possible direction the CCP regime is heading to and indeed planning to head to, given the fact that the Western, “bourgeois liberal” democracy (*democracia*) has already been ruled out of the cards, or at least not until mid-2000s. In fact, following Professor Zhou Tianyong from the Central Party School, China’s authoritarian one-party political system will and should remain unchanged until at least 2037 (Zhou, Wang and Wang (eds), 2007: 2, 6, 45-46, see Bo, 2009: 10-11). This is in line with what Deng Xiaoping stated in 1987, that direct general elections could only be held after half a century had passed in the 2000s, and at the moment the country had to make do with indirect elections above the county level and direct elections only at county and below county level, given the colossal population and inadequate level of cultural quality of the people (Hu, Hu, He and Guo, 2009: 19-20<sup>62</sup>).

#### 4.3. Political Reform: Pax Sinica sine Trias Politica?

Government, even in its best state, is but a necessary evil; in its worst state, an intolerable one.

Thomas Paine (1776), *Common Sense*, Ch. 1

While the establishment of village committees in rural areas through direct elections began in 1988, a year before the 1989 tragedy, the “Organic Law on

Village Committees” – according to which, the director, deputy director, and members of the village committee are directly elected by villagers for a term of three years, and villagers who are at least 18 years old have the right to vote and to stand for election – was only officially promulgated in November 1998 (Bo, 2009: 7), some years after the post-Tiananmen uncertainties, and grassroots elections were expanded to the township level in the same year and the county level in 2002 (*ibid.*: 7-8).

After the 13th Party Congress in October 1987, at which Zhao Ziyang – who became the Party’s general secretary and first vice-chairman of the Central Military Commission – proposed the one and only political reform package in the history of the Chinese Communist Party which attempted to introduce reforms such as the separation of power between Party and State (Zhao, 2009: 286)<sup>63</sup>, and the successful experiment on the “permanent party congress system” in the Jiaojiang 椒江 district<sup>64</sup> of the prefecture-level city of Taizhou 台州, Zhejiang Province, in 1988-1989, such voting system on the appointment and removal of cadres was only promoted again by the Central Organization Department in 2001 (Bo, 2009: 13-14), years after the post-Tiananmen uncertainties. Further intra-party democratization ensued, including the Plenum Voting System whereby the party’s leading cadres are selected by the plenum of the party committee through secret ballot:

In April 2004, the CCP Central Committee promulgated a regulation on “methods of selecting and recommending candidates for chief leaders of the party committee and the government of the next lower level by voting in the party’s local committee plenary sessions.” The regulation provides that candidates for chief positions of the party and the government of the city, prefecture, league, county, district, flag, township, and neighborhood should in general be presented to the plenum of the party committee of the next higher level where the appointment will be decided through secret ballot. For chief positions of the party and the government at the prefecture and county levels, the standing committees of the provincial party committee and the municipal party committee should nominate candidates, respectively and the respective plenums will review them and make a decision by secret ballot.

(Bo, 2009: 14-15)

In short, we are witnessing intra-party democratization picking up speed again after the historic political reform package introduced by Zhao Ziyang at the 13th Party Congress in October 1987 was temporarily halted after the 1989 tragedy. With 1989 as the watershed, CCP’s elite political thinking has markedly progressed from Deng Xiaoping’s complete dismissal of the North Atlantic democracy, especially the *trias politica* (tripartite separation of powers) for checks and balances<sup>65</sup>, to affirmation at least in theory by the Hu-Wen administration<sup>66</sup> the notions of democracy, the rule of law, freedom,



and human rights as universal common values of the humankind, which, as we have seen, has been accompanied by the remarkable pace of intra-party democratization.<sup>67</sup> However, as Minzner (2006: 21) noted, all the institutional reforms so far “share a common thread: firm commitment to the principle of centralized Party control”:

Officials have curtailed social and political reforms when they appear to challenge this core principle of centralized Party control. Since the late 1980s, Chinese officials have allowed citizens to take part in local elections for village committees. But they have quashed local experiments aimed at expanding these initiatives to higher levels in the Chinese bureaucracy, and have maintained tight control of the nomination and selection of candidates to screen out individuals who might challenge Party control. Similarly, in the late 1990s, Chinese officials created a regulatory structure to govern the registration of civil society organizations with more attenuated ties to the state. But when a group of social activists attempted to use these channels in 1998 to openly register branches of the Democracy Party, Chinese officials rapidly suppressed the group and sentenced the leaders to lengthy prison terms. This unwillingness to alter core principles of centralized Party control appears to make it unlikely that officials will be able to address the institutional factors that drive social unrest.

(*ibid.*)<sup>68</sup>

This is made absolutely clear in the State Council’s October 2005 White Paper on “Building Political Democracy in China” which stated that “Party committees serve as the leadership core over all [government and mass] organizations at the same level [...] and through Party committees and cadres in these organizations, ensure that the Party’s policies are carried out [...] Party committees ensure that Party proposals become the will of the state, and that candidates recommended by Party organizations become leaders in the institutions of state power.”<sup>69</sup> That this remains the overriding cardinal principle of political logic is evident in the unusual political discourse emerged recently related to the 30th anniversary of the establishment of Shenzhen Special Economic Zone (SEZ). During Premier Wen Jiabao’s visit to Shenzhen on 20th August 2010, he openly called for the SEZ to implement political reform “lest we are moving into a blind alley”, leading to calls from many academics for launching a Shenzhen “special political zone” at the anniversary.<sup>70</sup> This, however, has led to a backlash from the State media denouncing the interpretation of political reform as adopting Western capitalist or bourgeois democracy and *trias politica* separation of powers, and President Hu Jintao while lauding the “Shenzhen spirit” in his speech at the 30th anniversary celebration ceremony on 6th September has stuck to the realms of economic reform, industrialization, urbanization and modernization, apparently ignoring Wen’s call for political reform two weeks earlier.<sup>71</sup>

#### 4.4. State/Leninist Corporatism?

Infidelity does not consist in believing, or in disbelieving, it consists in professing to believe what one does not believe.

Thomas Paine (1794), *The Age of Reason*, Part I

In the process of maintaining a tight grip on political power in maintaining the Party-State monopoly while delivering on the economic front and bringing prosperity and wellbeing to the long-suffering people of this giant country, the neo-authoritarian developmentalism followed by the CCP since 1989 could be leading the country on a path threaded before by various East Asian countries – a model sometimes termed “State corporatism”. The post-1989 State corporatism, or referred to by some observers as “Leninist corporatism”<sup>72</sup>, bears a close resemblance to Franco’s *Nuevo Estado* (New State), and the “harmonious society” vision declared in recent years recalls Franco’s vision of social cohesion and harmonious relationship between employers and workers via corporatism that would promote a close collaboration between them under the direction of the State and his corporatist policies to regulate the economy by controlling the conditions of work, wages, prices, production and exchange, though Gunther (1980: 3) somehow described Franquist Spain as “halfheartedly” corporatist:

Labor unions were outlawed, and in their place were created 27 vertical syndicates, to which nearly all workers, technicians and employers belonged. “Representative” institutions (e.g. the Cortes and local government bodies) were organized along corporatist lines. Nevertheless, hundreds of economic and social organizations (which either were considered to be non-political by nature or were formed by groups supportive of the regime) remained completely independent of the state-dominated corporative structure.

While it is interesting to discern both similarities and contrasts between this and the case of post-1989 China, and corporatism, or State corporatism, might not be a grand theory that could adequately explain the new, emerging developmental paradigm in China’s astounding transition, it may yet prove to be helpful in understanding the inevitable transforming political landscape which, as Unger and Chan (2001) argued, could be moving in a “societal corporatist” direction in incremental shifts instead of the introduction of any form of political democracy, and as Unger and Chan further observed, the exclusion from these corporatist structures of the peasants and most of the non-State-sector workers whose grievances would thus be devoid of such mechanisms for articulation does not auger well for social and political stability. Some aspects of State corporatism may indeed recall the classic analysis of Bonapartism as a basis of State autonomy. Being propelled into a leading position by a balance of class forces, combined with the inability of

the subordinate classes to exercise control over their supposed representatives in the State apparatus, the government – or here the Party-State – uses the leverage gained to preserve both the status quo and the interests of the dominant class. The dominant class (or the bourgeoisie, as in Marx's (1852) original description of the Bonapartist regime in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*), in turn, is willing to abdicate to a certain extent its opportunity to rule in exchange for other kinds of protection by the ensuing strong State (Stepan, 1985).<sup>73</sup> Therefore it is important to recognize that the State, or a Party-State, is neither necessarily a neutral nor a passive actor. It may be perceived as an autonomous body that possesses its own interests and objectives independent from the rest of the populace. It can be a potentially disinterested party that engages in mediation and crisis management. However, it can also negotiate to achieve goals based on narrower interests. The State can use its influence to establish, entrench or expand its power (Enloe, 1980). In a way, while the 1989 events and tragedy can be seen as a culmination of the unstable development of an early stage of State corporatism since reform began partly due to the liberalism of the Hu-Zhao administration, the tragedy can also be observed to be the catalyst of the subsequent authoritarian corporatist evolution and reaffirmation of the path of economic reform (after Deng's *nanxun*) and economic success as realization of the root causes of the tragedy had served to spur the CCP into attempting to reinvent itself as a strong, benevolent and enlightened ruler (i.e. a *dictablanda*), or as Thomas Hobbes referred to in his 1651 treatise, "the generation of that great Leviathan".<sup>74</sup>

## 5. Concluding Remarks

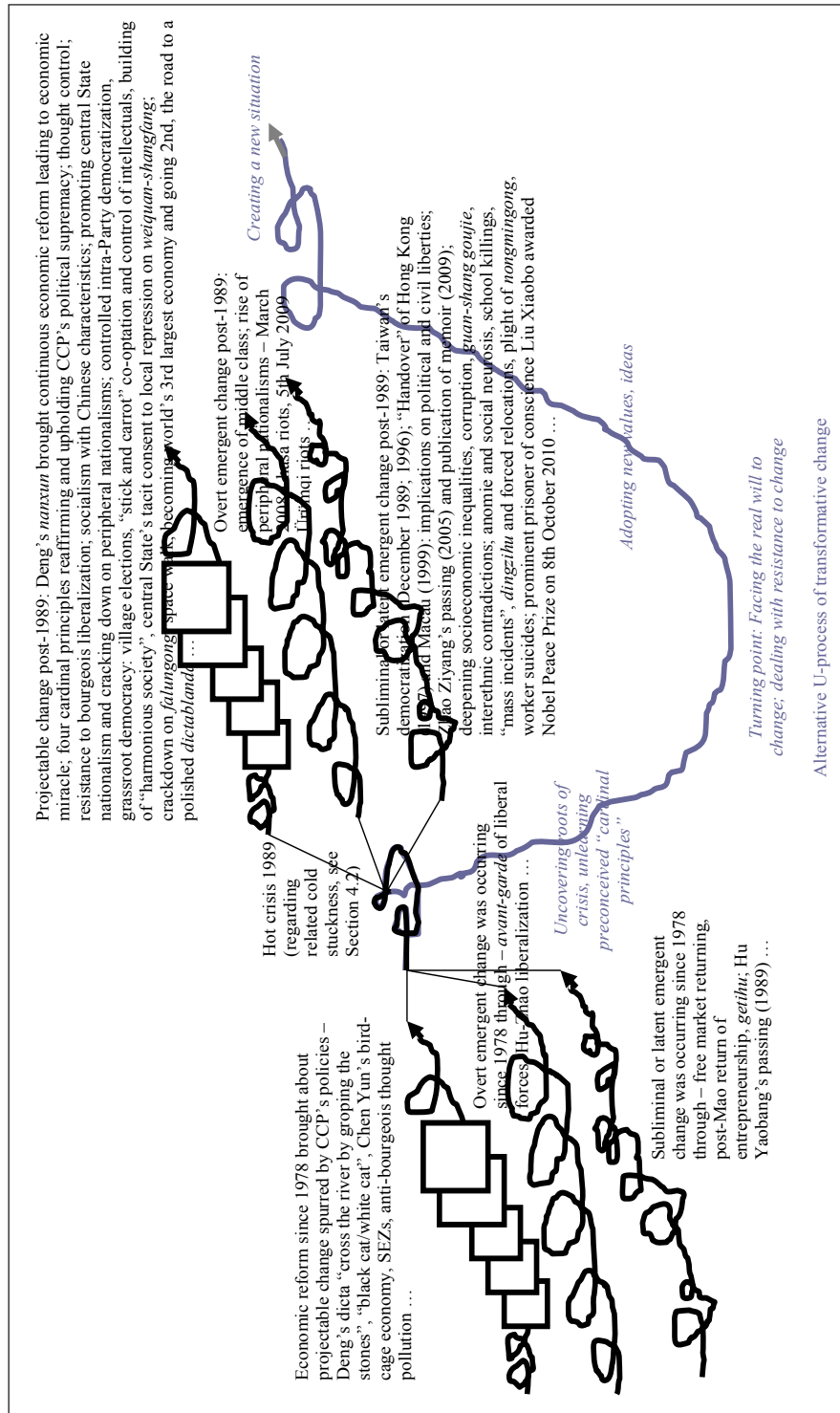
Winston Churchill, in 1939, called Russia "a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma"<sup>75</sup>. This prologue, in conjunction with the special issue's later discourse on ethnoterritoriality, examines a no less enigmatic country whose geographical size is as massive, whose population is as complex, and whose modern blood-stained epic of a history is both momentous and torturous, harrowing yet monumental. In a sense, China as a self-contained East Asian land mass is comparable to Russia as a self-contained Eurasian land mass. Both countries are more a continent than a country, both enjoying a sense of geographical isolation that feeds much the national psyche and popular subconsciousness of aloofness and conceit. This paper, together with the issue's later tract on ethnoregionalism and peripheral nationalism, looks at the modern timeline of sociopolitical and socioeconomic development and transformation of China, focusing on a number of critical junctures where different critical decisions were made that have determined the subsequent course of socioeconomic and political development of the country. Also

examined are the State responses at times of crisis – how Mao’s passing was followed by two-step forward, three-step back political liberalization and “selective centralization”<sup>76</sup> in a system that could be perplexingly described as “regionally decentralized authoritarian”<sup>77</sup>. In his iconoclastic 1985 study, Charles Tilly questioned the idea of a social contract in state making, where a society whose shared norms and expectations call forth a certain kind of government, and defined “those peculiar forms of governments we call national states” as “relatively centralized, differentiated organizations the officials of which more or less successfully claim control over the chief concentrated means of violence within a population inhabiting a large, contiguous territory” (Tilly, 1985: 170). Without going so far with Tilly in seeing nation-states as “quintessential protection rackets with the advantage of legitimacy”, it is still impossible not to question the long taken-for-granted notion of the inviolable sovereignty of the nation-state and even the very essence of the nation-state itself. Benedict Anderson, too, defined a nation as a community socially constructed and ultimately *imagined* by the people who perceive themselves as part of that group and “regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible [...] for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willingly to die for such limited imaginings” (Anderson, 1991: 6-7). The sovereignty of a nation-state is imagined, according to Anderson, because the concept was born in an age in which Enlightenment and Revolution were destroying the legitimacy of the divinely-ordained, hierarchical dynastic realm, giving rise to the national dreams of freedom whose gage and emblem were the sovereign state. Similarly, other historicists (in contrast to the primordialists) like Ernest Gellner and Eric Hobsbawm also posited that nations and nationalism are products of modernity and have been created as means to political and economic ends, and the nation, assuming the nineteenth-century conceptual entity of a nation-state, is the product of nationalism – but not *vice versa* – through the unification of various peoples into a common society or community (Gellner, 1983; Hobsbawm, 1990). It is in this context of nation-state as imagined community that the issue’s later disquisition on ethnoregionalism and peripheral nationalism will pick up where the present paper has left, to proceed to examine and analyze the causes and implications of the July Fifth Xinjiang riots against the backdrop of economic and political reforms and the intriguing question of China’s centralism v. decentralization.

China has come a long way, difficult and laudable, culminating in the country claiming to have superseded Japan to become the world’s second largest economy in 2010<sup>78</sup>. Going back to the critical juncture of 1989, that year’s student movement which snowballed into social protests of

unprecedented scale is in many ways a return of May Fourth. While May Fourth of 1919 had eventually led to the triumph of Maoism-Leninism which in a way hijacked the early socialism of Ch'en Tu-hsiu (Chen Duxiu 陳獨秀)<sup>79</sup>, the 1989 tragedy represented a prelude to the subsequent hijacking of the Hu-Zhao administration's initiative for politico-economic liberalization by the strengthening one-party authoritarian State corporatism preferred by Deng Xiaoping who once and again felt wary of and threatened by his protégés' "bourgeois liberalization". The conservative backlash has since complicated the uneasy coexistence of a highly decentralized economic structure brought through the no-holds-barred market economic reform with a highly centralized illiberal political regime or a proto-*dictablanda* which might have, among other ramifications, limited the possible extent of accommodation of ethnic and ethnoregional aspirations and precipitated the tragic events of 14th March 2008 and 5th July 2009. "Left alone, crises do get unconsciously resolved over time, tragically or happily or somewhere in-between", observed Reeler (2007: 12), "But they can also be more consciously and proactively resolved through well led or facilitated transformative change processes." The resolution of the 1989 crisis in a tragedy and the purge of the political reformists in a way shut down the transformative change wing<sup>80</sup> of the bifurcation facing the CCP at that time and led to the protracted cold stuckness in sociopolitical modernization and its uneasy coexistence with accelerated market reform that brought national economic prosperity. Theo Lefevre, prime minister of the Belgian coalition government which drafted and passed the 1961-63 language laws, was said to have called Belgium "a happy country composed of three oppressed minorities" (Covell, 1985: 230) – referring to the country's forever squabbling Flemings (*Vlamingen*) and Walloons (*Wallons*) and probably less so, the Germans.<sup>81</sup> Taking a cue from that, while hymns are being sung, justifiably, to short-term economic miracle and national glory, much care should probably be taken in the officially sanctioned building of a "people first" (*yi min wei ben* 以民为本) "harmonious society" (*hexie shehui* 和谐社会) that such eulogizing would not be at the expense of the golden opportunities for more holistic transformative reforms during this period of economic success, that central State nationalism bordering on dominant-group ethnocentrism would not be tacitly promoted at the expense of more accommodation of peripheral ethnoregional nationalisms, and that in full recognition of the overt and subliminal emergent changes that have not ceased to exist as undercurrents in a nexus of contradictions beneath the officially sanctioned projectable changes, these projectable changes would not be looked upon as policy guidance simply to maintain and justify the cult of a *dictablanda* at the expense of the long-term greater good (Figure 21).

Figure 21 China's Economic Reform and Socioeconomic Changes since 1978: Institutions, Agents and Events



## 6. Structure of the Volume

Following the prologue, the other thirteen papers in this special issue are divided into three sections. The first section *Social Change, State and the Civil Society* consists of four papers, beginning with Gregor Benton's article, "Dissent and the Chinese Communists before and since the Post-Mao Reforms", that looks at extra-party dissent under CCP before and since 1949, from during the Mao era to the post-Mao decades. Distinguishing between opposition and dissent under Communist regimes, Benton argues that at least until the 1980s Chinese communism and the democracy movement never wholly excluded one another. Focusing on the advent of the information age, Chin-fu Hung, in the second article under this section, "The Politics of China's *Wei-Quan* Movement in the Internet Age", argues that empowerment by the modern information technology could be making some public protests ("mass incidents") a threat to China's sociopolitical stability and the rule of the CCP regime, in contrast to the many that are spontaneous, loosely organized, and eventually short-lived. While traditionally the practices and governing logic in China have been lacking in accommodating the needs of civic engagement in public affairs, Hung observes that the Chinese public is awakening to begin defending their protected civil and legal rights especially with onset of the age of the Internet. The prospects of political change, both positive and negative, constitute the focus of the subsequent paper by Shigeto Sonoda, "Emergence of Middle Classes in Today's Urban China: Will They Contribute to Democratization in China?", which examines whether or how urban middle classes will bring about political change, or democratization, in the Chinese society. Using two different datasets, Sonoda's analysis points to the ambivalence of the Chinese urban middle classes' political orientations and behaviours. Leaving sociopolitical change to move into social connections and social network, this section continues with Lucia Leung-Sea Siu's paper, "Gangs in the Markets: Network-Based Cognition in China's Futures Markets", which looks at social connectivity within the investor community of China's commodity futures markets which she found somewhat analogous to the traditional Chinese *bang* 幫 or gang. Based on empirical ethnographic fieldwork and documentary research, Siu argues that the markets consist of flexible socioeconomic aggregates in continuous interaction with each other, whose characteristics are shaped by social connectivity and background affiliation, while capital factions display properties of distributed cognition and network-based rationality.

Beginning the subsequent section of the volume, *Social Change, Social Classes and Stratification*, Kate Hannan's paper, "Chinese Migrant Workers: From Labour Surplus to Labour Shortage", charts the action taken by migrant workers in China's low-end/labour-intensive manufacturing hubs when the global financial crisis led to a reduction in their employment opportunities,

wages and conditions, and proceeds to discuss the migrant worker situation as it stands today. Focusing on three aspects of the migrant labour situation in China – how the migrant labour surplus that came in the wake of Chinese export orders declining following the global financial crisis had eventually turned into a shortage; the present situation where the migrant workers’ relatively more active strategy is bringing about changes in wages as well as State response; the very fact that the migrant workers have been paying all along a disproportionate price for their country’s industrial and urban development – Hannan argues for a more pro-active approach to promote the interests of migrant workers instead of for Chinese government leaders and officials and a range of other Chinese commentators to be merely paying lip service to publicly recognize the considerable contribution made by these workers who have been “left out of the wealth”. Also looking at the labour issue, Qi Dongtao’s paper, “Chinese Working Class and Trade Unions in the Post-Mao Era: Progress and Predicament”, in turn examines the changes and predicaments of the Chinese working class as a whole and the role of the trade unions in contemporary China. Observing the Chinese working class today to be highly heterogeneous and stratified, Qi’s study points to the significant decline in the working class’ political and economic privileges since the early 1980s and the failure of the Chinese trade unions, as State apparatuses, in protecting workers’ interests due to their institutional over-dependence on the government. Also looking at the transformation of the class structure, Yang Jing on the other hand analyzes the pertinent issues related to the rise of the middle class in China, including its sociopolitical outlooks, and the future prospects in her paper, “Stumbling on the Rocky Road: Understanding China’s Middle Class”. While recognizing that China is still far away from being a middle-class society, Yang nevertheless calls for government action to help overcome pressing challenges that are contributing to the vulnerability of the nation’s nascent, diverse middle class.

The final section of this volume, *Social Change, Collective Action and Nationalism*, comprises six papers that deal with a range of critical social issues of contemporary importance in China today – “mass incidents”, central State and peripheral nationalism, protection of environmental and cultural heritage in the face of the onslaught of economic development and industrialization, and the State’s media initiatives to shape the country and the regime’s international image. In the first paper of this section, “Three Waves of Nationalism in Contemporary China: Sources, Themes, Presentations and Consequences”, Yang Lijun and Lim Chee Kia explore the development of Chinese nationalism in the contemporary era by placing it in the context of State-society relations, its significance and implications being dependent on State-society interaction. While recognizing that today’s China is a multifaceted society in terms of ideology where different discourses are contesting for influence, Yang and Lim



have kept their sharp focus on the country's nationalism to reveal the dynamics of ideational changes in contemporary China in the context of the evolvement of State-society relations as well as the implications for international relations. Looking at the large-scale social protests or "mass incidents" since the turn of this century, the next paper by Yanqi Tong and Shaohua Lei, "Large-Scale Mass Incidents and Government Responses in China", presents a systematic analysis of the distribution, frequencies, types, patterns and consequences of such large-scale mass incidents in China in recent years. By focusing their analysis on "large-scale mass incidents" (i.e. involving more than 500 participants), Tong and Lei delve further into the causes of the protests and the impacts of State response and implications for the State itself as well as State-society relations. Also focusing on the issue of public protests, Shan Wei in his paper, "Explaining Ethnic Protests and Ethnic Policy Changes in China", turns our attention to the protest behaviour of China's non-Han ethnic minorities, focusing specifically on the Xinjiang conflict of July 2009 and the Tibet riots of March 2008. Beginning with a discussion of the three theories of political contention and collective conflict – greed, grievance and opportunity – as applied to the China context, Shan argues that these ethnic riots have stemmed from various key factors, including economic inequalities, the lack of religious freedom and the incompetence of local governments, and that Beijing's current economy-centred policy adjustments to promote stability in the ethnic regions in the aftermath of these riots, while might be promising at the moment, would inevitably be facing critical challenges in the long run.

While not completely taking a break from the preceding issues in particular those concerning regional ethnic minorities, Gary Sigley and Lye Liang Fook, in the next two papers, turn our attention to China's problem of environmental and cultural destruction and the State's response to the challenges in terms of the country's and ruling regime's international image. Sigley's paper, "Cultural Heritage Tourism and the Ancient Tea Horse Road of Southwest China", reviews the environmental and cultural destruction brought about by China's modernization and examines the possible role tourism may play in the cultural heritage preservation of the particular case of Chama Gudao 茶馬古道 – the "Ancient Tea Horse Road" which represents a cultural route of enormous significance to the many different ethnic communities in southwest China. Rather than the standard form of mass commercial tourism which itself could be contributing to such environmental and cultural destruction – the latter process often a by-product of modernization which in ethnic minority areas the locals tend to refer to as *hanhua* 漢化 ("becoming Han") – Sigley argues for a model that involves more culturally sensitive forms of community-based sustainable tourism, by targeting the four major participants in the production and consumption of tourism, i.e. the government, tourism operators and developers, local communities and tourists. The issue of cultural heritage is

also a major underlying element when Lye argues in his paper “China’s Media Initiatives and Its International Image Building” that China’s trying to lay the foundations of her soft power, including extending the reach of her Confucius Institutes worldwide, forms the context within which the media initiatives the ruling regime has undertaken in recent years aiming at improving the country’s international image can be best understood. While there has apparently been international recognition of improvement, for instance that the Chinese government had allowed significantly greater foreign media access to Ürümqi following the deadly rioting there in early July 2009 than it had in the case of the Lhasa riots in March 2008, Lye observes that it is still premature and unrealistic to conclude that the media initiatives have succeeded in portraying a positive image of China. Finally, returning to the issues of nationalism, social protests and ethnoregionalism touched upon earlier, the closing paper of this section, “Ethnoregional Disparity, Ethnoterritoriality and Peripheral Nationalism: Socioracial Dilemmas in Contemporary China” by Emile Kok-Kheng Yeoh, analyzes the involuted nexus between the challenges posed by central-peripheral conflicts, ethnoterritorial aspirations, income and wealth inequalities and interregional economic disparity exacerbated by the country’s “retreat from equality” over the recent decades. While proceeding to ponder the pitfalls and prospects of further decentralization and contemplate the feasibility of the road beyond fiscal federalism, Yeoh cautions that ethnoregionalization of poverty may add to decentralization, especially in the absence of a federal *process*, the threat of centrifugal tendencies especially if decentralization leads to a politics of cutthroat competition instead of a decentralized politics of accommodation and the resultant provincial protectionism intensifies local particularism and peripheral nationalism, hence precipitating secessionistic ethnogenesis or reethnicization. This volume ends with two book review articles by Gregor Benton and Sabrina Chong Yee Ching. As this is a special issue, an index is added to facilitate referencing.

This issue represents a collection of selected papers, reviewed and duly revised, among the many that were originally presented at the ICS 2010 International Conference “China in Transition – Economic Reform and Social Change”. I would like to thank Miss Susie Yieng-Ping Ling 林燕萍, editorial manager of the journal, for her impeccable administrative help in making the publication of this issue on time possible. The cover photograph of this issue is one that I took in April 2010 during my stay in Beijing – a street scene that I believe could fully reflect the astounding transformation that the Chinese society has undergone during the recent decades. I am grateful to Mr Lionel Wei-Li Liong 梁偉立, the journal’s editorial assistant, for the technical help in using the photograph for cover design and for his great assistance in proof-reading the final manuscripts. The responsibility for any errors and inadequacies that remain is of course fully mine.

**Appendix**  
Chinese Corrupt Officials who Fled the Country

	Name	Post before Fleeing	Age at Time of Fleeing	Destination of Fleeing	Amount of Embezzlement
1	Lu Wanli	Head, Road and Transport Department, Guizhou Province	—	Fiji	¥55.369 million
2	Yang Xiuzhu	Deputy head, Development Department, Zhejiang Province	—	US	¥200 million
3	Wang Feng	Deputy department head, Foshan, Guangdong Province	—	New Zealand	¥30 million
4	Lan Fu	Vice-Mayor, Xiamen, Fujian Province	—	Australia	¥5.0576 million
5	Zheng Zhixin	Cashier, National Tax Bureau, Yunnan Province	—	Burma	¥0.67 million
6	Yu Zhendong	Branch director, Bank of China	38	US	US\$483 million
7	Yu Zhi'an	Company director general	63	Philippines	¥100 million
8	Ding Lan	Branch department head, Bank of China	36	Thailand	¥195 million
9	Cheng Sanchang	Company director general	61	New Zealand	¥10 million
10	Jiang Jifang	Bureau head, company manager, party secretary	59	US	¥200 million
11	Tong Yanbai	Company director general	53	Australia	n.a.
12	Dong Mingyu	Company general manager	55	US	n.a.

Appendix (continued)

	Name	Post before Fleeing	Age at Time of Fleeing	Destination of Fleeing	Amount of Embezzlement
13	Chen Xin	Branch officer, China Industrial & Commercial Bank	35	Vietnam, Burma	¥40 million
14	Luo Qingchang	Company director general	42	US	¥33.85 million
15	Chen Chuanbo	Factory director	61	US	¥16 million
16	Lu Haiying	Company general manager	49	US	¥80 million
17	Bi Dongchen	Company branch deputy manager	27	n.a.	¥32.632 million
18	Gao Shan	Branch director, Bank of China	43	Canada	¥839 million
19	Xie Bingfeng Mai Ronghui	Branch credit officers, Bank of China	28 28	Thailand	¥52.5 million
20	Xiao Hongbin	Company director general	43	Australia	Cheated US\$760 million
21	Chen Anmin	Factory director	45	Hungary	¥2 million
22	Yin Guoqiang	Company manager	42	Romania	¥7.11 million
23	Qian Hong	Company director general	46	Panama	¥500 million
24	Xu Xiaoxuan	Company manager	40	Australia	¥460 million
25	Huang Qingzhou	Company branch deputy general manager	47	Thailand	HK\$1.3 billion
26	Fu Puzhao	Company general manager	45	Burma	Cheated ¥40.35 million
27	Yu Aiqing	Company manager	34	Russia	Cheated ¥9 million
28	Yang Rong	Company director general	46	US	n.a.

Appendix (continued)

	Name	Post before Fleeing	Age at Time of Fleeing	Destination of Fleeing	Amount of Embezzlement
29	Chen Manxiong	Company manager	40	Thailand	¥420 million
30	Zhou Changqing	Company general manager	44	Ecuador	¥55.15 million
31	Zhong Wujian	Market director	46	Canada	¥500 million
32	Wang Debao	Company department deputy head	30	Russia	¥1.25 million
33	Yang Yanjun	Company branch accountant	32	Mongolia	¥2 million
34	Fang Yong	Bank officer	25	Canada	¥1.41 million
35	Li Huaxue	Company deputy general manager	43	Australia	¥13.33 million
36	Jin Licheng	Bank department deputy head	33	Cambodia	¥1.23 million
37	Ahmed Ibrahim	Xinjiang Agricultural Bank Ürümqi branch officer	31	Russia	¥2.338 million
38	Lin Jincai	Bank vault security officers	30	Thailand	¥9.5 million
	Chen Guoqiang		31		
39	Ma Weihong	Company department head	38	Burma	¥0.39 million
40	Liu Zuoqing	Company general manager	49	US	¥100 million

Note: n.a. – data not available.

Source: Shang (2007: 8-11) (original source: Yu Jintao 于锦涛, “Rang Ni Zhenjing de Waitao Tanguan Mingdan: Guojia Gouxiang Fan Fubai Fa 让你震惊的外逃贪官名单: 国家构想反腐败法” [Shocking list of fleeing corrupt officials: nation thinking up anti-corruption law], *Liaowang Dongfang Zhoukan* 瞭望东方周刊 [Look east weekly], 12th July 2006).

## Notes

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1. 改革开放政策.
2. Or more officially, the “Communist Party of China” (CPC).
3. An important point to note here is that there are crucial socioeconomic reasons behind the ethnolinguistic and ethnoreligious divides. This is especially the case in Brazil and Spanish speaking America where ethnic markers are relatively fluid, as reflected in the Brazilian proverb: “A rich black man is a white and a poor white man is a black” (Mason, 1970: 122). It is in this light that the attribute “ethnic” may not be as exact as “socioracial”, which reflects the concept of “social race” (*vis-à-vis* “biological race”) expounded by Wagley (1959).
4. “*Mo zhe shitou guo he* 摸着石头过河.”
5. Émile Durkheim (1895; trans. 1938), *The Rules of Sociological Method*, edited with introduction by Steven Lukes, New York: The Free Press, 1982, p. 53.
6. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762), *Émile, ou De l’éducation*, translated by Allan Bloom with introduction, New York: Basic Books, 1979.
7. In the case of China, a road not taken two decades ago in 1989.
8. See Émile Durkheim’s *Suicide* (1897). A related condition is acedia which Thomas Aquinas identified with “the sorrow of the world” (*Summa Theologica, Secunda Secundae*).
9. Despite rumoured allegation that some cases could be murders linked to the factory security office (大纪元时报 (*The Epoch Times* (Malaysia)), Issue 93, June 2010).
10. 东方日报 (*Oriental Daily News*, Malaysian daily), 21st July 2010 and 6th August 2010.
11. Including those that killed 8 and injured 5 in Fujian province, killed 2 and injured 5 in Guangxi, injured 19 in Guangdong, injured 32 in Jiangsu, injured 5 in Shandong and killed 9 in Shaanxi (东方日报, 1st May 2010).

12. 光华日报 (*Kwong Wah Yit Poh*, Malaysian Daily), 4th August 2010.
13. 东方日报, 26th June 2010.
14. 东方日报, 9th July 2010.
15. The “helping hand” and the “grabbing hand” were said to be the same “invisible hand on the left” described by Olson (2000). Gu and Chen’s analysis with a multiregional econometric model found that “[w]hen local revenue share rises, the helping hand of local government becomes stronger and further leads to promotion in local economies and subsequently the national economy. When the centre increases its revenue share and adopts other recentralization measures, local governments become losers and switch from helping to grabbing hand.”
16. These studies, including Huther and Shah’s, were cited by Tugrul Gurgur and Anwar Shah of the World Bank (2000). Gurgur and Shah’s study also confirmed that decentralization support greater accountability in the public sector and reduce corruption.
17. Although the scope of China’s economic decentralization goes far beyond decentralization in public finance, but even measured solely by the latter, China has been said to be the world’s most economically decentralized country (Xu, 2008: 187-188) given that China’s local public spending has since the mid- and late 1980s been steady at about 70 per cent of her total national public spending, whereas in federal countries such as the US, Germany and Russia, the proportions of local public spending in total national public spending are only respectively 46 per cent, 40 per cent and 38 per cent. From the angle of central-local economic relations, China is also one of the most, or to some, even *the* most economically decentralized countries in the world, with most parts of resources controlled by the local governments, including the allocation of land, energy and financial resources (*ibid.*: 187). In fact, one of the characteristics of China’s economic decentralization is the relative self-sufficiency of the local economy whether at the provincial level or the county level. The local governments are fully responsible for the launching and coordination of local reform, for local economic development, and for the legislation and law enforcement within their respective jurisdictions. Such a characteristic not only marks China’s economic institution apart from a central planning economic system, but also makes her local governments more powerful in competences than the local governments in most federal countries in the world. (*ibid.*: 188)
18. Referring to the 22 *sheng* (i.e. provinces), 5 *zizhiqu* (i.e. “autonomous regions” – each a first-level administrative subdivision having its own local government, and a minority entity that has a higher population of a particular minority ethnic group – of Guangxi 广西 of the Zhuang, Nei Monggol/Inner Mongolia 内蒙古 of the Mongols, Ningxia 宁夏 of the Hui, Xizang/Tibet 西藏 of the Tibetans and Xinjiang 新疆 of the Uyghurs) and 4 *zhixiashi* (municipalities under the central government) (see Table 2).
19. The tragedies befalling people who are forced to be relocated are vividly recorded in a recent book relating heart-rending tales of people who would not submit to the forced relocation to make way for the Shanghai World Expo of 2010 – a dark side of the glorious event that involved people being beaten to death, tortured and imprisoned (see Du Bin 杜斌 (2010), *Shanghai Kulou Di* 上海骷髏地/Shanghai

Calvary), Taipei: Ming Pao Ch'upanshe 明報出版社 (Ming Pao Press). Also little reported is the plight of the 1.27 million people relocated to make way for the construction of the Three Gorges Dam, a monstrous project that put under water Hubei and Chongqing's 20 districts and counties, over 270 villages and townships, over 1500 enterprises and over 34 million squared metres of houses. Like the above case of Shanghai, with low compensation, these "Three Gorges migrants" have since been suffering from psychological problems common to uprooted people, facing problems of adaptation, often exploited by the local authorities and feeling discriminated by the locals, and some migrant villages have turned into vice dens. (东方日报, 7th June 2010)

20. Often translated as "nail house", *dingzihu* refers to a household who refuses to be relocated to make way for real estate development.
21. Hu Angang (2006), *Great Transformations in China: Challenges and Opportunities*, Oxford University Press, cited in Hutton (2006: 127).
22. *Weiquan* refers to the quest for protecting and defending the civil rights of the citizenry by non-State actors. *Shangfang*, a centuries-old tradition in China, refers to the action of people with grievances who take the last resort of going to Beijing, the capital, to attempt to get their complaints heard against local injustice.
23. 东方日报, 18th March 2009.
24. The term "xiagang" refers to redundant workers mainly at State enterprises, without directly describing them as "unemployed". Still officially attached to their work units or enterprises, the *xiagang* workers continue to receive basic minimum subsidies for their living and medical expenses, and are encouraged to change job, probably through State-run job and re-employment centres, or go into small businesses. In line with State enterprise reforms, the number of *xiagang* workers has been on the rise: 4 million in 1995, 8 million in 1996, 12 million in 1997, 16 million in 1998, 20 million in 1999, though dropping to 11 million in 2001. (Zhou, 2006: 289)
25. Such as the bloody Han-Hui ethnic conflicts in 2004 and 2007.
26. 东方日报, 23rd March 2009.
27. Cited in Hutton (2006: 126).
28. See, for instance, Professor Lü Yuanli 吕元礼's best-selling Chinese tome "Why Can Singapore Do It?" (2007).
29. Ultimately, as Fang (1991: 254-255) warned, "There is no rational basis for a belief that this kind of dictatorship can overcome the corruption that it itself has bred. Based on this problem alone, we need more effective means of public supervision and a more independent judiciary. This means, in effect, more democracy." ("China's Despair and China's Hope", originally appeared in *The New York Review of Books* on 2nd February 1989, translated by Perry Link.) Describing China as "doubtless a post-totalitarian regime ruled by a ruthless Party", Béja (2009: 14-15) ruminated on the 20th anniversary of the Beijing-Tiananmen massacre: "Twenty years after the 4 June 1989 massacre, the CCP seems to have reinforced its legitimacy. It has not followed the communist regimes of the Soviet bloc into oblivion. Its policies of elite cooptation, subtle response to social contradictions, and instrumental support for the 'rule of law'



have become major complements to its continued control over the press and the political system. It has made concessions to prevent discontent from crystallizing into social movements that might challenge its rule, and it has sent in the police to silence dissidents. Over the course of the same two decades, the opposition has had to wrestle with the trauma of the June 4 Massacre and the huge difficulties that it has raised for anyone who would challenge the CCP's primacy."

30. See, e.g. Bo (2010). In an interesting attempt at refutation of Minxin Pei's (2006) claim of CCP's illegitimacy, Bo has set out to refute point by point Pei's arguments which were based upon a series of international indexes which the former listed in details: "China is one of the most authoritarian political systems in the world according to the Polity IV Project, is almost completely 'unfree' according to the Freedom House; and is one of the most corrupt countries according to Transparency International. China was ranked in the bottom third of the eighty countries surveyed in terms of 'quality of governance ranking' according to one group of the World Bank and was considered a weak state according to another group of the World Bank. China found itself next to the legion of failed states and most repressive countries in terms of 'voice and accountability' and also in the company of weak states such as Nicaragua, Cambodia, Papua New Guinea, Egypt, and Mali in terms of 'regulatory quality'. China was no better than Namibia, Croatia, Kuwait, and Mexico in terms of 'government effectiveness', was comparable to Belarus, Mexico, Tunisia, and Cuba in terms of 'political stability', and was in the company of Mexico, Madagascar, and Lebanon in terms of 'rule of law'." (Bo, 2010: 102-103, citing Pei, 2006: 5-6)
31. According to a report published on China's National Bureau of Statistics website on 14th January 2009, the confirmed 2007 GDP of China at current prices amounted to 25.7306 trillion yuan, an increase of 13 per cent from the previous year (东方日报, 16th January 2009). While observed to be still short of a third of US's GDP, analysts had predicted China's GDP to overtake Japan's in three to four years, just as it overtook the United Kingdom and France in 2005 and Germany in 2008. Nevertheless, according to an announcement by Yi Gang 易纲, the director of the State Administration of Foreign Exchange and the deputy governor of China's central bank, the People's Bank of China, on 30th July 2010, China had already superseded Japan to become the world's second largest economy in 2010. However, in terms of GDP per capita, Japan's (US\$37800) was more than 10 times that of China (US\$3600) in year 2009, and Japan's GDP per capita ranking, while having dropped from world's number 2 in 1993 to number 23 by 2008, was still far ahead of China's which ranked beyond 100 (东方日报, 9th August 2010).
32. Equivalent to about 2130 ringgit. "Yuan 元" is the largest denomination of China's currency "renminbi 人民币" ("people's currency", RMB), equivalent to about US\$0.146.
33. Equivalent to about 70 ringgit.
34. 东方日报, 7th December 2008.
35. China's 2008 definition for absolute poverty is annual net income per capita under US\$785 (about 2860 ringgit), that for low income is US\$786 to US\$1067

- (about 2853 ringgit to 3873 ringgit) – which is lower than that used by the World Bank (*ibid.*).
36. 世界日報 (*World Journal*) (US), editorial on 15th March 2009, reprinted in 東方日報, 17th July 2009.
  37. 東方日報, 17th February 2009 and 29th June 2009. The largest denomination of China's renminbi 人民币 is yuan 元 / 圓 (Latinized symbol ¥ or Y), a term with cognates in the Japanese yen or en 円 (from 圓; Latinized symbol ¥) and Korean wŏn 원 / 圓 (Latinized symbol ₩). Following the US (rather than British) convention, billion = 1000,000,000 and trillion = 1000,000,000,000.
  38. 東方日報, 23rd June 2009.
  39. 東方日報, 29th June 2009.
  40. 東方日報, 29th June 2009.
  41. *Nongye renkou quan* 农业人口圈, *chengzhen jumin quan* 城镇居民圈, *gongren quan* 工人圈, *ganbu quan* 干部圈.
  42. *Xingzheng jibie* 行政级别.
  43. Totaled about 130 million, China's *nongmingong* have today turned into a unique community of breathtaking proportions. With a high degree of mobility, the over a hundred million people shuttling on the railways and roadways of China every year during the Spring Festival (*chunjie* 春节 – Chinese New Year) have become a unique phenomenon in the world (東方日報, 30th March 2009).
  44. The term “State” with a capital “S” is used in this chapter (except in some quotations) to refer to the central body politic of a civil government – in contrast with the private citizenry or a rival authority such as the Church, whereas “state” with a lower-case “s” refers in general to other senses of the term, including a “country” or a political territory forming part of a country. The word “nation” in this sense is generally avoided since it has the alternative connotation of a community of common ethnic identity, but not necessarily constituting a state.
  45. As Beard (1948: 220-2) noted: “[...] many of our neglects, overstresses, and simplifications are due to the divorce of political science from history [...] if political science, economics, law and sociology were cut entirely loose from history, they would become theoretical, superficial, and speculative, or what might be worse, merely ‘practical’, that is, subservient to vested interests and politicians temporarily in power.”
  46. For instance, the “critical structural period”, when definitive State response to exigencies generated by a country's ethnic diversity, came in the year 1970 both in Malaysia (the implementation of NEP) and in Belgium (beginning of the federalization process), and at the end of the 1970s in Spain (the 1978 Constitution that saw the emergence of the Autonomous Communities, and the approval of the Statutes of Autonomy for all of these Communities from 1979 to 1983).
  47. The Wade-Giles transliteration, the scheme commonly used before CCP's popularization of *Hanyu Pinyin*, in brackets. Note Wade-Giles's use of apostrophe – accurate though slightly clumsy – to indicate aspiration.
  48. With the creation of the keywords of reform including “loosen”, “devolve”, “share profit”, “reinvigorate” (*songbang* 鬆綁, *fangquan* 放權, *rangli* 讓利, *gaohuo* 搞活) etc.

49. 东方日报, 3rd June 2009.
50. Hutton's figures, drawn from Zhang, Nathan and Link (2001), were those of the General Office of the State Council reported to the Committee of Elders. Hutton also cited the estimates of Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn, Beijing correspondents of the *New York Times*, that up to 800 unarmed people were killed and several thousands injured (Kristof and WuDunn, 1994, cited in Hutton, 2006: 364).
51. The structure of political party systems and more specifically their level of internal centralization have been argued to be the determinants of the fiscal structure of the State, i.e. the *degree* of decentralization, in the studies on decentralization as a means for democratizing political regimes and enhancing the efficiency of public policy, its implications for service delivery and democracy, and the political determinants of the process of devolving resources and policy responsibilities to subnational governments (Montero, 2001: 43). In her paper on the case of Latin America, Escobar-Lemmon (2001: 28) noted that at least there "the process of decentralization has come about in parallel to the process of democratization" and the "rationale is that strong subnational power centers will check the national government, consequently preventing the re-emergence of a strong, authoritarian leader nationally." Thus, according to Escobar-Lemmon, "decentralization becomes a way to avoid political crises and/or democratic breakdown. Given that political decentralization could increase opportunities for democratic participation, there is reason to believe that there is a systematic relationship between decentralization and democratization." Elaborating on his second fundamental characteristic of a federal system – democratic pluralism both between and within the territorial components – Duchacek (1988: 16-17) drew attention to federalism being a territorial twin of the open democratic society: "Federalism is not compatible with authoritarian socialist and fascist one-party systems and military juntas. If a single party delegates some minor parts of its central power to the territorial components in which single-party rule also prevails, the result is a unitary and centralist system or, at best, an association or league of territorial dictatorships [...] a spatially sectorized unitary system or a confederation of [...] single-party territorial components [...] a territorial dimension of Lenin's "democratic centralism" – inter-territorial and inter-factional consociationalism of a special kind, but not a federal democracy."
52. In his letter to the 15th Party Congress in 1997 during his house arrest, Zhao (2009: 79) lamented the halting of the political reform he initiated, "Because of the impact of the [Tiananmen] incident, the political reform initiated by the 13th Party Congress died young and in midstream, leaving the reform of the political system lagging seriously behind. As a result of this serious situation, while our country's economic reform has made substantial progress, all sorts of social defects have emerged and developed and are rapidly spreading. Social conflicts have worsened, and corruption within and outside of the Party is proliferating and has become unstoppable."
53. The 1989 Tiananmen demonstrations being the first uprising in a whole series of similar events that led to the demise of authoritarian rule in Eastern Europe countries and Mongolia, the fact that most of these countries were Soviet satellite

states with Communist Party rule virtually planted by the USSR rather the result of in the main part homegrown – though foreign inspired – mass revolutionary movement, and that their 1989-1990 protest movements came after the shocking Beijing-Tiananmen massacre all apparently played their roles in the diverse State response between China and these states, perhaps with the exception of Romania which took a popularly supported palace and army coop to overthrow the hated Communist dictator Nicolae Ceauşescu.

54. Spontaneous as the 1989 Tiananmen protests, the “demonstrations that erupted on 4th May 1919 developed into a loose nationalist political movement that was one of the antecedents of the Communist Party’s own official foundation in 1921” (Hutton, 2006: 7).
55. In principle, i.e. irrespective of whether a country’s government is democratic, despotic like Burma, totalitarian like North Korea, or even genocidal like Sudan, the former Democratic Kampuchea or the murderous Serbian militia in a disintegrating Yugoslavia.
56. While still rudimentary, the rehabilitation and other *de facto* de-Mao programmes, or even the liquidation of the research office of the central Secretariat, and the closing down of left-wing magazines such as *Red Flag*, led the way to further internal structural reform of the CCP in coming days (MacFarquhar, 2009: xxi).
57. How effective are such elections as a means for rural governance democratization? Ann Thurston, who has followed such village elections since 1994, drew the following rather mixed conclusions (see Ann Thurston, “Village Democracy in China” <<http://www.chinaelections.org>>, cited in Yu, 2004): “First, the local emperors who came to power with the collapse of the communes still exist in some places. Usually they are able to exert control because they are also very rich, are in control of much a [sic] of a village’s resources, and are able to influence higher levels in the government and party hierarchies. Second, many villages continue to exist in a vacuum of leadership. When, for instances, I have had the opportunity to visit Chinese villages with friends rather than through official sponsorship, it seems I invariably happen upon villages which are suffering crises of leadership, villages where elections, if they have been held at all are only pro forma, and the village leader is generally weak and ineffectual. Third, I have seen cases, too, where they local emperors are actually elected, ostensibly democratically. These are instances, for instance, where the second candidate seems to have been put there only for the sake of complying with election regulations and where the village chief who is running for re-election also controls a major portion of the village resources ... Finally, and most important, I have also seen elections that by any measure anywhere in the world would be recognized as genuinely competitive, fair and democratic ...”
58. “Hong Kong Reporter Being Held By China”, Washington Post Foreign Service, 30th May 2005. <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/05/29/AR2005052900986.html>>
59. 东方日报, 14th February 2009.
60. Seven being the worst rating and 6 next to worst, thus making her one of the 19 “worst of the worst” countries in terms of political rights and civil liberties (Pudington, 2010: 5), just marginally better than Burma, North Korea, Sudan, Libya,

- Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea and Somalia that were all rated 7 on both political rights and civil liberties (Freedom House, 2010).
61. Cited in Diamond (2002: 24).
  62. Cited from 邓小平文选, 1993 ed., Vol. 3, 人民出版社, pp. 220-221.
  63. Besides his declaration that China is at the “initial stage of socialism” which served to clear the way for further market transformations. See “A Brief Biography of Zhao Ziyang”, in Zhao (2009: 283-287).
  64. The most successful among the 12 counties (cities, districts) in the provinces of Zhejiang, Heilongjiang, Shanxi, Hebei, and Hunan that the Central Organization Department chose to conduct the first round of experiments on the “permanent party congress system” (Bo, 2009: 13).
  65. “In developing our democracy, we cannot simply copy bourgeois democracy, or introduce the system of a balance of three powers. I have often criticized people in power in the United States, saying that actually they have three governments [...] when it comes to internal affairs, the three branches often pull in different directions, and that makes trouble. We cannot adopt such a system.” – Deng Xiaoping, “Take a Clear-Cut Stand against Bourgeois Liberalization”, 30th December 1986. <<http://web.peopledaily.com.cn/english/dengxp/vol3/text/c1630.html>>
  66. The current administration of President Hu Jintao 胡锦涛 and Premier Wen Jiabao 温家宝.
  67. See, for instance, Bo (2009: 16).
  68. Dissident Xie Changfa 谢长发 was sentenced to 13-year imprisonment for his involvement in organizing the China Democracy Party since 1998. His conviction followed those of the civil rights activists Huang Qi 黄琦, Tan Zuoren 谭作人 and Guo Quan 郭泉, who voiced out on the alleged school building construction scandal following the 2008 Sichuan earthquake that resulted in huge number of student casualties due to the collapse of school buildings (东方日报, 3rd September 2009). The epitome of the prisoners of conscience at the moment is of course Liu Xiaobo 刘晓波, the key founder of “Charter 08” (*Ling-ba Xianzhang* 零八宪章), who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on 8th October 2010, in a year with a large number of the nominees for the prize being persecuted Chinese dissidents and civil rights activists including prominent figures like Wei Jingsheng 魏京生, Gao Zhisheng 高智晟, Chen Guangcheng 陈光诚 and Hu Jia 胡佳.
  69. State Council Information Office, “White Paper on Building of Political Democracy in China”, 19th October 2005 <[http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-10/19/content\\_486206.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/english/doc/2005-10/19/content_486206.htm)>, cited in Minzner (2006: 9-10).
  70. 东方日报, 27th August 2010, 6th September 2010.
  71. 东方日报, 6th September 2010, 7th September 2010. Old ways die hard, anyway – while Wen calls for Shenzhen’s political reform, the city has declared a list of *personae non gratae* consisting of *shangfang* petitioners, political dissidents, released labour camp inmates, troublemakers who frequently “make things difficult” for the government, *dingzihu* in relocation disputes, *falungong* followers, as well as drug addicts (东方日报, 6th September 2010).
  72. See, e.g., Hutton (2006: 8, 98, 144-148).
  73. In the context of modern multiethnic societies, particularly those with an economy dominated by the minority, members of the demographically/politically

- dominant group are often willing to grant greater autonomy to a State (and its élite managers), which implements preferential policies in their favour.
74. “The only way to erect such a common power, as may be able to defend them from the invasion of foreigners, and the injuries of one another [...] is, to confer all their power and strength upon one man, or upon one assembly of men, that may reduce all their wills, by plurality of voices, unto one will [...] This is the generation of that great Leviathan [...]”, said Thomas Hobbes in *Leviathan* (1651).
  75. Cited in Lin (2009: 351).
  76. For such institutionalized relationship between the central State and the localities, see Zheng (1999).
  77. See Xu (2008).
  78. See note 31.
  79. In a way analogous to the French Revolution being hijacked by Maximilien Robespierre’s Reign of Terror. Ch’en Tu-hsiu’s socialism was but one of the twin manifestations of the May Fourth spirit, the other being liberalism represented by Hu Shih 胡適.
  80. See note 7.
  81. Jules Destrée, the Belgian politician at the turn of the century, once remarked to King Albert: “Let me tell you the truth, the great and horrifying truth: there are no Belgians.” (“Laissez-moi vous dire la vérité, la grande et horrifiante vérité: il n’y a pas de Belges”, Jules Destrée, *Lettre au Roi sur la séparation de la Wallonie et de la Flandre*, 15 août 1912, cited in Quévit, 1982: 71.) Doubts about the existence of a Belgian identity (*belgitude*) above those of the Flemings (*Vlamingen*) and Walloons (*Wallons*) have dominated much of modern Belgian history. The earliest use of the term “belgitude” can be traced to Brugmans (1980), cited in Dumont (1989). Although Brugmans’s article is written in Dutch, he has coined the term in French. “Belgitude”, according to Brugmans, is “a shared sense of belonging as Belgians (*een Belgische samenhorigheid*), a Belgian mentality” (see Dumont, *ibid.*: 16). Can we talk about a *sinitude* for China and what would that mean from the perspective of the country’s non-Han nationalities?

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## Part II (569-644)

### Ethnoregional Disparity, Ethnoterritoriality and Peripheral Nationalism: Socioracial Dilemmas in Contemporary China

## **Ethnoregional Disparity, Ethnoterritoriality and Peripheral Nationalism: Socioracial Dilemmas in Contemporary China**

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### **Abstract**

While Chinese economic reform in the recent decades has brought about stunning economic miracles, it also aggravated the problems of unemployment, poverty and inequality that continue to plague China in her politico-socioeconomic development into the new millennium, and with poverty having the properties of being concentrated in the western region and in the ethnic minority areas, ethnoregionalization of poverty inevitably ensues, presenting the country not only with economic challenges but also long-term sociopolitical uncertainties. Focusing on the involuted nexus between the challenges posed by central-peripheral conflicts, ethnoterritorial aspirations, income and wealth inequalities and interregional economic disparity exacerbated by the country's "retreat from equality" over the recent decades, the revival of old regionalisms, the creation of new regionalisms brought about by increased local autonomy, as well as the evolving role of the one-party State in the economy and society, this paper proceeds to ponder the pitfalls and prospects of further decentralization and contemplates the feasibility of the road beyond fiscal federalism. While the alleviation of the multi-faceted problem of poverty in China is inevitably linked to the country's regional and minority policies and hence may call for a stronger emphasis on the elements of decentralization and localization, the paper does caution that the same problem with its ethnoregional dimension may also add to decentralization the threat of centrifugal tendencies especially if decentralization leads to a politics of cutthroat competition instead of a decentralized politics of accommodation and the resultant provincial protectionism intensifies local particularism and precipitates secessionistic ethnogenesis or reethnicization.

**Keywords:** *ethnic diversity, ethnoterritoriality, national question, peripheral nationalism, ethnoregionalism, intergroup relations*

## 1. Introduction

In terms of the link between ethnic diversity and public policy, the outwardly homogeneous China shares with a country like multiethnic Spain in their common majority-minority ethnic configuration, as compared to, say, countries like the mainly bi-ethnic Belgium and Malaysia which are characterized by a “precarious balance” in intergroup relationship<sup>1</sup>. While the development of the Spanish political reform is influenced by the dominant group’s reaction to subordinate groups’ aspirations and that of Belgium or Malaysia is shaped more by intergroup competition and variations in the balance of power, China is unique due to her long-running absolute Han predominance in demography and political configuration, with her minority ethnic groups – while large in absolute numbers – as a whole not even reaching a critical mass as a proportion of the country’s total population. Yet multiethnic countries like Spain and China share much in terms of the territoriality of their ethnic divisions, homeland nature of all the major ethnic factions, though not level of economic affluence and political democracy and any common strategy of adopting some form of political decentralization and fiscal federalism during the last few decades in response to the exigencies engendered by their respective patterns of ethnic conflicts.

## 2. Ethnic Identity and the Nationality Question

The fact that China is technically speaking, if one follows the critical mass approach<sup>2</sup>, not a multiethnic country, with the majority Han constituting 92 per cent of the population, often obscures the fact that the ethnic minorities are huge in absolute numbers – about 110 million in total, including the 16 million Zhuang, 10 million Manchu, 9 million Hui, 8 million Uygurs, 5 million Mongols and 5 million Tibetans – although they are practically dwarfed almost to invisibility by the sheer size of the Han population. Although the race-neutral<sup>3</sup> policy of the Chinese State does contain certain elements of affirmative action in favour of the minorities, poverty is still highly concentrated in the ethnic minority areas<sup>4</sup> and ethnic regions in western China are clearly disadvantaged for both historical (being marginalized by centuries of Han-Chinese imperial expansion<sup>5</sup>) and geographical (e.g. terrains which are mountainous, desertified, environmentally fragile) reasons. Despite that, these ethnic minorities’ pattern of habitation should no doubt be of strategic concern for the central government, for the country’s over 21000 km land frontier borderline region is basically populated with these minorities who are also distributed over 64 per cent of the whole country (Chen, Wang, Chen and Fang, 2007: 61). In general, China’s ethnic distribution simultaneously shows patterns of concentration as well as intermingling.



There is wide geographical distribution of each ethnic group, showing a pattern of wide scattering with small concentrations – the Hui, for instance, who are distributed across most provinces/zizhiqu and most cities, towns and counties of the country, relatively more so in Ningxia, Gansu, Henan, Xinjiang, Qinghai, Yunnan, Shandong, Anhui and Liaoning, but with a sixth of the total population concentrated in the Ningxia Hui Zizhiqu; or the Manchu who are distributed among over a thousand cities, towns and counties across the country, but with relative concentration in the Northeast and with over 50 per cent of the total population inhabiting the Liaoning province, over 2.11 million in Hebei, 1.03 million in Heilongjiang and 0.99 million in Jilin; or the Zhuang with 87 per cent of the total population of over 16.17 million

Table 1 China: Ethnic Composition – The National Picture (percentage)

1 Han 汉	92	29 Tu 土	0.017
2 Zhuang 壮	1	30 Xibe (Xibo) 锡伯	0.015
3 Manchu (Man) 满	0.9	31 Mulam (Mulao) 仫佬	0.014
4 Hui 回	0.8	32 Kirghiz (Kirgiz) 柯尔克孜	0.013
5 Miao 苗	0.7	33 Daur (Tahur) 达斡尔	0.0108
6 Uyghur (Uyghur) 维吾尔	0.63	34 Jingpho (Jingpo) 景颇	0.0106
7 Yi 彝	0.58	35 Salar (Sala) 撒拉	0.0077
8 Tujia 土家	0.51	36 Blang (Bulang) 布朗	0.0073
9 Mongol 蒙古	0.43	37 Maonan 毛南	0.006
10 Phöpa (Zang/Tibetan) 藏	0.41	38 Tajik 塔吉克	0.0029
11 Bouyei (Buyi) 布依	0.23	39 Pumi 普米	0.0026
12 Dong 侗	0.22	40 Achang 阿昌	0.0025
13 Yao 瑶	0.19	41 Nu 怒	0.0024
14 Chosŏn (Korean) 朝鲜	0.17	42 Evenki (Ewenki) 鄂温克	0.0023
15 Bai 白	0.14	43 Kinh (Vietnamese) 京	0.0017
16 Hani 哈尼	0.11	44 Jinuo (Jino) 基诺	0.0016
17 Li 黎	0.0985	45 De'ang 德昂	0.0014
18 Kazakh (Kazak) 哈萨克	0.0983	46 Uzbek (Ozbek) 乌孜别克	0.0013
19 Dai 傣	0.091	47 Russki (Russian) 俄罗斯	0.0012
20 She 畲	0.06	48 Yugur (Yugu) 裕固	0.00109
21 Lisu 傈僳	0.05	49 Bonan (Bao'an) 保安	0.00103
22 Gelao (Gelo) 仡佬	0.039	50 Oroqen (Olunchun) 鄂伦春	0.00062
23 Lahu 拉祜	0.036	51 Moinba (Menba) 门巴	0.00066
24 Dongxiang 东乡	0.033	52 Drung (Dulong) 独龙	0.00052
25 Wa (Va) 佤	0.0312	53 Tatar (Tartar) 塔塔尔	0.00045
26 Sui (Shui) 水	0.0307	54 Hezhen (Hezhe) 赫哲	0.00038
27 Nakhi (Naxi) 纳西	0.025	55 Gaoshan 高山	0.00025
28 Qiang 羌	0.018	56 Luoba (Lhoba) 珞巴	0.00021

Source: Computed with census data.

Table 2 China: Ethnic Distribution<sup>#</sup> by Province/Zizhiqu/Zhixiashi<sup>+</sup>

	<i>Province/zizhiqu/zhixiashi</i>	<i>Ethnic distribution</i>
1	<b><i>Qinghai*</i></b>	Han 汉 54%; Tibetan 藏 23%; Hui 回 16%; Tu 土 4%; Salar (Sala) 撒拉 2%; Mongol 蒙古 2%
2	<b><i>Xinjiang*</i></b> (Uygur Zizhiqu)	Uyghur (Uygur) 维吾尔 45%; Han 41%; Kazakh (Kazak) 哈萨克 7%; Hui 5%; Khalkh 1%; Mongol 1%
3	<b><i>Guangxi*</i></b> (Zhuang Zizhiqu)	Han 62%; Zhuang 壮 32%; Yao 瑶 3%; Miao 苗 1%; Dong 侗 1%
4	<b><i>Guizhou*</i></b>	Han 63%; Miao 12%; Bouyei (Buyi) 布依 8%; Dong 5%; Tujia 土家 4%; Yi 彝 2%; Gelao (Gelo) 仡佬 2%; Sui (Shui) 水 1%; Bai 白 1%
5	<b><i>Yunnan*</i></b>	Han 67%; Yi 11%; Bai 4%; Hani 哈尼 3%; Dai 傣 3%; Zhuang 3%; Miao 2%; Hui 2%; Lisu 傈僳 1%; Lahu 拉祜 1%; Wa (Va) 佤 1%; Nakhi (Naxi) 纳西 1%
6	<b><i>Ningxia*</i></b> (Hui Zizhiqu)	Han 65%; Hui 34%
7	<b><i>Inner Mongolia*</i></b> (Mongol Zizhiqu)	Han 79%; Mongol 17%; Manchu (Man) 满 2%; Hui 1%
8	Hainan	Han 83%; Li 黎 16%; Miao 1%; Zhuang 1%
9	Liaoning	Han 84%; Manchu 13%; Mongol 2%; Hui 1%; Chosŏn (Korean) 朝鲜 1%
10	Hunan	Han 90%; Tujia 4%; Miao 3%; Dong 1%; Yao 1%
11	Jilin	Han 91%; Korean 4%; Manchu 4%; Mongol 1%
12	<b><i>Gansu*</i></b>	Han 91%; Hui 5%; Tibetan 2%; Dongxiang 东乡 1%
13	<b><i>Xizang/Tiber*</i></b> (Tibetan Zizhiqu)	Tibetan 93%; Han 6%
14	<b><i>Chongqing*</i></b> (Zhixiashi)	Han 94%; Tujia 5%; Miao 2%
15	<b><i>Sichuan*</i></b>	Han 95%; Yi 3%; Tibetan 2%
16	Heilongjiang	Han 95%; Manchu 3%; Korean 1%
17	Hubei	Han 96%; Tujia 4%
18	Hebei	Han 96%; Manchu 3%; Hui 1%
19	Beijing (Zhixiashi)	Han 96%; Hui 2%; Manchu 2%
20	Tianjin (Zhixiashi)	Han 97%; Hui 2%; Manchu 1%
21	Fujian	Han 98%; She 畲 1%
22	Guangdong	Han 99%; Zhuang 1%

Table 2 (continued)

	<i>Province/zizhiqu/zhixiashi</i>	<i>Ethnic distribution</i>
23	Henan	Han 99%; Hui 1%
24	Zhejiang	Han 99%
25	Shandong	Han 99%; Hui 1%
26	Anhui	Han 99%; Hui 1%
27	Shanghai (Zhixiashi)	Han 99%
28	<b>Shaanxi*</b>	Han 100%
29	Jiangsu	Han 100%
30	Shanxi	Han 100%
31	Jiangxi	Han 100%

# China as a whole – Han 92% + 55 other “nationalities” (*minzu* 民族) including Zhuang 1%, Manchu 0.9%, Hui 0.8%, Miao 0.7%, Uygur 0.68%, Tujia 0.65%, Yi 0.63%, Mongol 0.47%, Tibetan 0.44%, etc.

+ Decimals are rounded to the nearest. Ethnic groups below 1 per cent are not shown.

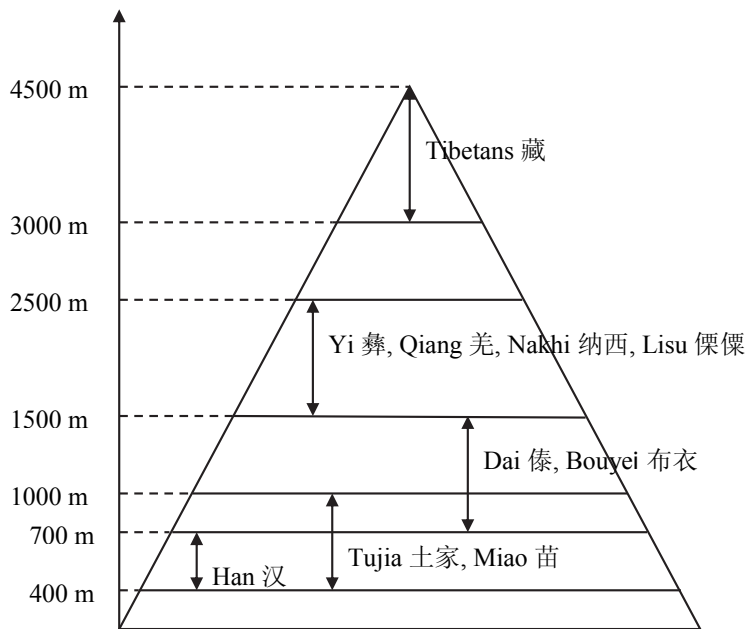
\* **Provinces, zizhiqu, and zhixiashi now classified as the “western region”.**

Source: Computed with census data.

concentrated in Guangxi Zhuang Zizhiqu and the rest distributed in the adjacent areas of Yunnan and Guizhou; or the Dong who are concentrated in the adjacent areas of Hunan, Guizhou and Guangxi; or the Miao with half of the total population of 8.9 million inhabiting Guizhou and the rest distributed among the province’s surrounding areas in Yunnan, Guangxi, Hubei, Hunan, Chongqing and Sichuan; or the Yi who mainly populate Yunnan and Sichuan, but also Guizhou (*ibid.*).

A distinctive feature of the distribution of China’s ethnic minority communities is that they are mainly found in the mountain areas. Other than some minorities like the Manchu and the Hui who traditionally stay on the plains and in the cities, the majority of China’s ethnic minorities are staying on the plateaux and in the remote mountain areas, and out of the total of 106.43 million ethnic minority population (8.41 per cent of China’s total population), over 50 per cent are staying in the country’s mountainous southwestern and northwestern regions (*ibid.*: 62). Besides, there is an apparent ethnic distribution by degree of elevation. Take the southwestern mountain area as an example (*ibid.*: 45): the Han are mainly living on the plains and in the hilly areas of an elevation of 400-700 metres, Tujia and Miao at 400-1000 metres, Dai and Bouyei (Buyi) at 700-1500 metres, Yi, Qiang, Nakhi (Naxi) and Lisu at 1500-2500 metres, and Tibetans at 3000-4500 metres (Figure 1).

Figure 1 China: Vertical Distribution of Ethnic Groups in Southwestern Mountain Region



Source: Chen, Wang, Chen and Fang (2007: 45).

As noted by Gladney (1991: 6-7), due to the interchangeability of the terms “ethnicity” and “nationality” in the literature, there is much confusion over minority nationality identity in China. The term *minzu* 民族 is used for both concepts of nationality and ethnicity (or *zhongzu* 种族) in China, the former being what the Chinese State has designated “56 nationalities”. While “ethnicity” should more rightly refer to an individual’s self-perceived identity, it is also often influenced by State policy. Gladney pointed out that in contrast to the limited term *minzu* (“nationality”/“ethnicity”) used in China, Soviet ethnological vocabulary distinguished in Russian between *ethnos*, *nationalnost*, and *narodnost* (“ethnicity”, “nationality”, “peoplehood”) (*ibid.*: Chapter 1, note 19). In China, “nationality” (*minzu*) is what the Chinese State has conferred upon the 56 ethnic groups identified mainly in the 1950s (*ibid.*: 6). This historical background explains a lot about China’s “national” policy till today.

Leaving aside the Han-non-Han dichotomy, even the so-called “Han Chinese” as a homogeneous ethnic group, whether phenotypically or culturally, may not be what it has always been taken for granted. The great diversity of the mutually unintelligible regionalects is well known. The speakers of many of the Chinese regional languages are in fact simply

too numerous for the word “dialects” to be used as an appropriate term to designate their languages. For instance, the number of speakers of either Cantonese/*Yue* 粵 or Hokkien/Fujianese/*Min* 閩 is larger than the number of speakers of either Polish or Ukrainian, the two East European/Slavonic languages with most numerous speakers except Russian, or the speakers of Dutch, Danish, Norwegian and Swedish combined. In China, regional differences, including the distinction between the wheat-eating northerners and rice-eating southerners, have always been observed, or as one observer noted, the *Hanjen* 漢人 and the *T'angjen* 唐人, plus “national minorities” who have to different extents been Sinicized:

The contradistinction between Han Chinese and national minorities repeatedly made [...] suggests that the Han Chinese constitute a homogeneous, discreet community from whom the national minorities are readily distinguishable. In fact, however, the cultural gap between “Han Chinese” and “minority” is often no greater than that between Han Chinese of different regions. There is an almost continuous ethnocultural spectrum extending from the northern, wheat-eating, Mandarin-speaking Chinese at one end to, at the other, the dark-skinned K'awa in the south who are primitive food-gatherers and speakers of a language of the Mon-Khmer family. In between are the more than 100 million “Han” Chinese of south-coastal China who speak dialects other than Mandarin and who, in fact, sometimes refer to themselves as *T'ang-jen* (men of T'ang, after the T'ang dynasty, seventh to tenth centuries) rather than as *Han-jen* (after the Han dynasty, third century B.C. to third century A.D.) and the more than ten million persons of the “national minorities” in south China who have been to varying extents acculturated to Chinese ways – to the point, in some cases, that they had no awareness of being different, of being a “minority,” until they were informed of the fact by workers from the Chinese Academy of Sciences who came to their areas after 1949.

(Moseley, 1966: 8-9)

While ethnic diversity may affect the role of the State, whether in terms of the various aspects of decentralization or the trend and pattern of budgetary policy, it is not the ethnic composition *per se* but its interaction with the socioeconomic structure of the society concerned that really matters. The Weberian approach views ethnic group as being not “natural” (as kinship group is) but “rational” and primarily political:

Ethnic membership (*Gemeinsamkeit*) differs from the kinship group precisely by being a presumed identity, not a group with concrete social action, like the latter. In our sense, ethnic membership does not constitute a group; it only facilitates group formation of any kind, particularly in the political sphere. On the other hand, it is primarily the political community, no matter how artificially organized, that inspires the belief in common ethnicity.

(Weber, 1968 tr.<sup>6</sup>: 389)

Contrast the Weberian approach with Geertz's approach in his 1963 paper on the effect of "primordial sentiments" on civil politics:

By a primordial attachment is meant one that stems from the "givens" – or, more precisely, as culture is inevitably involved in such matters, the assumed "givens" – of social existence: immediate contiguity and kin connection mainly, but beyond them the givenness that stems from being born into a particular religious community, speaking a particular language, or even a dialect of a language, and following particular social practices. These congruities of blood, speech, custom, and so on, are seen to have an ineffable, and at times overpowering, coerciveness in and of themselves.

(Geertz, 1963: 109)

Today, studies on intergroup relations usually see ethnicity not as a "given" of social existence", but a political construct linked directly to power relations and resource competition. The boundary marker of ethnicity is frequently mobilized to meet the rising need of identity investment for economic and political purposes (the "situation theories" of ethnicity, see Barth, 1969). Heiberg (1979) observed that for political purposes, descent has never been regarded by the Basques in Spain as a sufficient criterion for ethnic inclusion. "Basqueness" is measured instead in terms of the adherence to certain morally-loaded political and social prescriptions, or more specifically, whether one is a Basque nationalist.<sup>7</sup> Thus it is as an instrument for political mobilization that ethnicity often plays a key role in the interplay between group activities and public policy<sup>8</sup> which again is apparent in the case of the Uyghurs' ethnic identity in Xinjiang, as lucidly described by Gladney (2003: 3-4):

Chinese histories notwithstanding, every Uyghur firmly believes that their ancestors were the indigenous people of the Tarim basin, which did not become known in Chinese as "Xinjiang" ("new dominion") until the eighteenth century. Nevertheless, the identity of the present people known as Uyghur is a rather recent phenomenon related to Great Game rivalries, Sino-Soviet geopolitical manoeuvrings, and Chinese nation-building. While a collection of nomadic steppe peoples known as the "Uyghur" have existed since before the eighth century, this identity was lost from the fifteenth to the twentieth century [...] The Islamicization of the Uyghur from the tenth to as late as the seventeenth century, while displacing their Buddhist religion, did little to bridge their oases-based loyalties. From that time on, the people of "Uyghuristan" centred in Turpan, who resisted Islamic conversion until the seventeenth century, were the last to be known as Uyghur. The others were known only by their oasis or by the generic term of "Turki". With the arrival of Islam, the ethnonym "Uyghur" fades from the historical record.

The emergence of a modern “Uyghur” ethnic identity is thus basically a political construct:

Competition for the loyalties of the peoples of the oases in the Great Game played between China, Russia and Britain further contributed to divisions among the Uyghur according to political, religious, and military lines. The peoples of the oases, until the challenge of nation-state incorporation, lacked any coherent sense of identity. Thus, the incorporation of Xinjiang for the first time into a nation-state required unprecedented delineation of the so-called nations involved. The re-emergence of the label “Uyghur”, though arguably inappropriate as it was last used 500 years previously to describe the largely Buddhist population of the Turfan Basin, stuck as the appellation for the settled Turkish-speaking Muslim oasis dwellers. It has never been disputed by the people themselves or the states involved. There is too much at stake for the people labelled as such to wish to challenge that identification. For Uyghur nationalists today, the direct lineal descent from the Uyghur Kingdom in seventh century Mongolia is accepted as fact, despite overwhelming historical and archeological evidence to the contrary.

(Gladney, 2003: 4-5)

Similarly, answering the question “Who are the Chinese?”, Moseley observed that “Han Chinese” as an ethnic marker began with its use for political mobilization linked to the May Fourth Movement:

Psychologically, the Han Chinese only became a nation in response to Western imperialism; culturally, this movement was greatly reinforced by the literary reform movement led by Hu Shih and others. And nationalism has been a dominant feature of Chinese Communism. Yet much of China’s heterogeneity – in speech, diet, and physical appearance – so often remarked upon by foreign visitors still remains. With reference to its ethnic component, being “Chinese” is a dynamic quality. “Chineseness” may be likened to a geographical zone, a blurred place on the map, through which an unending stream of peoples has filtered in a north-south direction [...] On the whole, this southern movement was gradual and piecemeal, being characterized by an influx of Chinese colonizers from the north who mixed with the local people [...] The indigenous populations that have remained unabsorbed sometimes live side by side in discreet communities with the Chinese, sometimes retreat back into the hills, and sometimes attempt to emigrate southward. Thus, in any given national minority region of south China today there is a whole range of comparative “Chineseness” among the inhabitants which altogether eludes the dichotomy, “Han Chinese”-“national minority.”

(Moseley, 1966: 10-13)

The above description does not apply to Xinjiang – China’s “wild west” – and Tibet, in contradistinction to the southern regions or, with Chinese colonization greatly facilitated by railroads built by the Western powers, Inner

Mongolia to the north and the northeastern region formerly being Manchuria. Incidentally, Inner Mongolia had already been overwhelmingly Chinese by the time the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region was created in 1947, and in the case of the northeast “the Manchus disappeared and Manchuria became safely Chinese, dooming in advance the Japanese attempt to establish an independent ‘Manchukuo’” (*ibid.*: 13). In this contradistinction lies the root of the Chinese government’s present problem of Xinjiang and Tibet:

Outer Mongolia, Sinkiang, and Tibet retained their uniqueness: although held by successive Chinese dynasties, the imperial administration was always unstable because it lacked the ballast of a sizable Han Chinese community.<sup>9</sup> They were tied to China without ever becoming Chinese. Outer Mongolia broke away altogether and succeeded in establishing an independent state [...] With the modern transportation and communication facilities<sup>10</sup> developed by the Chinese Communists, the colonization of Sinkiang and Tibet is now proceeding, although it has encountered bitter resistance.

(*ibid.*)

### 3. Socioracial Fragmentation and Ethnoregional Dilemmas

If widening socioeconomic inequality and deepening corruption are the two most prominent manifestations of the internal structural contradictions of the path of policy development of the CCP post-1989 – not least of which is the authoritarian political centralism amidst *de facto* fiscal federalism and economic decentralization – a third manifestation, as mentioned earlier, social and socioracial unrest, closely linked to the previous two, is becoming an increasing headache for the ruling regime, rapidly growing with worrying frequency and escalating scale. While social unrest in general has been so frequent that they have grown into almost a part of daily life, those with a socioracial flavour<sup>11</sup> should be the most worrying for the ruling CCP including the recent two ultra-serious incidents of ethnoregional disturbance – the 14th March 2008 riots in Tibet and the 5th July 2009 riots in Xinjiang, with the latter claiming almost 200 lives, mostly Han, according to the Beijing government or as least 500, mostly Uyghur, dead<sup>12</sup> and nearly 10,000 Uyghur “disappeared” as alleged by Rabiya Qadir 热比娅<sup>13</sup>. Whether the riots and racial attacks had been triggered by the police and army firing on unarmed Uyghur protesters – in other words, a mini-Tiananmen – as alleged by Rabiya Qadir and Örkesh Dölet 吾尔开希 or simply Uyghurs going on a rampage against Han interests as claimed by the government, the ethnoregional content of this latest, probably the most deadly, incident of social unrest is unmistakable.

While the July Fifth riots in Ürümqi was triggered by the June 26th Uyghur-Han brawl – which was in turn triggered by the alleged rape of two



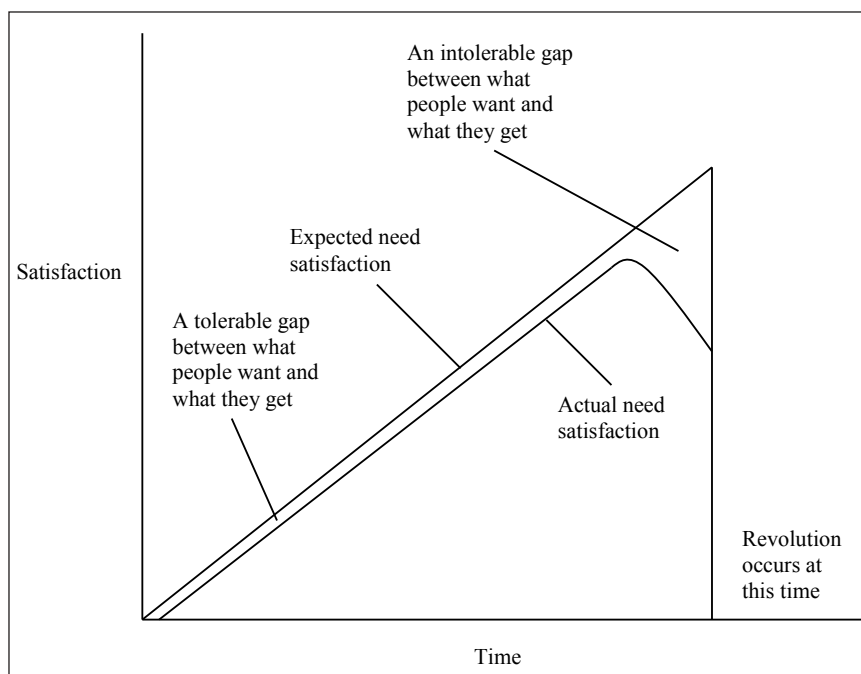
Han female factory workers by six Uyghur workers which the government condemned as an ill-intentioned rumour – at a Shaoguan 韶关 (Guangdong province) toy factory involving hundreds and ending up in the death of two Uyghurs, reciprocal resentment towards immigrants or settlers is equally familiar in the ethnic homeland regions of China, typically Tibet and Xinjiang. Such resentment of the local ethnic communities against large-scale migration of the country's Han majority into her ethnic regions is nothing peculiar. Such outburst of resentment, long suppressed under authoritarian rule, has become more and more a rule rather than exception in the major formerly Communist Party-ruled countries including the former Soviet Union and those in Eastern Europe. Similar conflicts, albeit with differing characteristics, are also witnessed all over the post-Cold War World, whether in Darfur or in Irian Jaya, whether stemming from the rise of ethnoreligious bigots or on the contrary, the demise of authoritarian rule that makes way for the spread of free market democracy (see, e.g. Chua, 2003)<sup>14</sup>. Similar development can be observed in the case of China, which can be explained by the underlying, natural and inevitable tendency of the development of “antisystem” in the overall social change referred to earlier in the special issue's prologue on a changing China, which a ruling regime may sometimes find it “inconvenient” to recognize:

[Some groups] may oppose the concrete levels at which the [values and] symbols are institutionalized [i.e. common norms established and legitimized] by the elite in power and may attempt to interpret them in different ways. They may not accept the models of cultural and social order that they think are upheld by the “center” as the legitimator of the existing distribution of power and resources, and they may uphold cultural orientations different from or counter to those upheld by the center. Other groups may develop new interpretations of existing models [...] Even if for very long periods of time a great majority of the members of a given society may identify to some degree with the values and the norms of the given system and be willing to provide it with the resources it needs, other tendencies develop in connection with intergroup conflicts, demographic changes, and the development of heterodox ontological visions and these changes may give rise to changes in the initial attitudes of any given group to the basic premises of the institutional system.

(Eisenstadt, 1992: 417)

Thirty years of economic reform, by bringing about a sea change in economic life and rule of game, has unleashed forces and momenta – whether in March-June 1989, March 2008 or July 2009, whether with or without an ethnoregional content – that had caught the ruling establishment by surprise and overtaken its ability to catch up and understand and to effectively accommodate. Raised expectation of what is now perceived to be possible

Figure 2 Davies's J-Curve Theory of Revolution



Source: Vander Zanden (1988: 584), Figure 21.2 (adapted from Davies, 1962: 6, Figure 1).

– paradoxically a result of the almost no-holds-barred shedding of egalitarian “socialist” State monopolistic central-planned “*chi daguofan* 吃大锅饭” [eating from one big wok] economic system for an unabashed rugged capitalist about-face (or, officially, “socialism with Chinese characteristics”) – has fuelled the passion for speedier targeted change (see Figure 2 on typology of political action in the issue’s prologue on China’s social transformation) and in the context of ethnicity or ethnoterritoriality brought back the long-suppressed ghost of identity investment which the ruling establishment could be ill-prepared to accommodate (as depicted in Davies’s J-curve shown in Figure 2).

#### 4. Peripheral Nationalism and the Ethnoregional Troubles

On the other hand, recent years have witnessed increasing nationalist sentiment tacitly encouraged by the Han political centre – especially among the young, many born or grew up after 1989, very much encouraged by China’s increasing international standing spurred by her new-found,

astounding economic strength and political and military might – a “centralist nationalism” that serves the CCP well. The “hundred years of national humiliation” stigma has been used time and again to explain or justify the upsurge of nationalism and the obsession over territorial integrity. Unity has been the greatest concern of the generation that holds dear to the conviction that China’s shameful defeat at the hands of Western and Japanese colonizers would never be allowed to be repeated, and that, though not often explicitly stated, high degree of regional autonomy especially in the non-Han ethnic regions like Tibet and Xinjiang could be the prelude to separatism and pave the way to China’s disintegration, as the cases of the former Soviet Union and Yugoslavia have amply attested to.<sup>15</sup>

To understand fully the Chinese central State’s unwavering position regarding such ethnoregional separatist sentiments, it is inadequate to attribute it, as quite often done, to “China’s obsession with national security and the integrity of its historical borders” (Cook and Murray, 2001: 147). Instead, one needs to go back to the fundamental tenets of Marxism-Leninism:

Marxist-Leninist theory on the national question defines a methodology for dealing with specific questions concerning the status of communities called nations or nationalities [...] According to Communists, the fundamental cleavages of world society are along class rather than national lines. “Nations” are artificial units which came into being with the rise of capitalism and which are destined to disappear when capitalism is replaced with Communism; nationalism is a club used by capitalists to keep the world proletariat divided and subdued. When the proletariat seizes power throughout the world, then, according to the theory, nations and nationalism will vanish.

(Moseley, 1966: 4-5)

Related to this, it is apparent that the national question has been central, not peripheral, to the revolutions in both Russia and China:

[...] the national question has been used by the Communists in both countries to promote the attainment of revolutionary goals as interpreted by Great Russians and Han Chinese, respectively. And when one realizes that more than half the population of Russia at the time of the October Revolution consisted of peoples other than the Great Russians, and that more than half the territory of China “liberated” in 1949-1950 was inhabited by peoples other than Han Chinese, it will be appreciated how immensely important the national question was to the success of both revolutions [...] In concrete terms, what “Marxist-Leninist theory on the national question” as applied in Russia and China really means is that claims for national independence on the part of minorities in socialist countries is [sic] counter-revolutionary, and only in capitalist and colonial countries are such claims correct. Once the Communist Party, the vanguard of the proletariat, seizes

power, then the oppression of one nationality by another is impossible; anyone still demanding independence, therefore, can only be an agent, witting or unwitting, of world imperialism and therefore an enemy of “the people.” By similar arguments it is demonstrated that national minorities do not need their own Communist parties, since their interests are abundantly guaranteed by the unique Communist Party of the country.

(*ibid.*: 6-7)

A correct perspective on the issue of ethnoregionalism and the root cause of ethnoregional secessionism and the accompanying peripheral nationalism – long regarded by the Party-State as irrational, ungrateful and unfathomable – free from the preconceived bias of “centralist nationalism” is important to understand the complexities of Xinjiang, Tibet, Taiwan and other chasms<sup>16</sup>, for as Eisenstadt noted, such conflicts are but part and parcel of pluralism:

Conflict is inherent in any setting of social interaction for two basic reasons. The first reason is the plurality of actors in any such setting. The second reason is the multiplicity of the principles inherent in the institutionalization of any such setting – the multiplicity of institutional principles and of cultural orientations – and the power struggles and conflicts among different groups and movements that any such institutionalization entails.

(Eisenstadt, 1992: 416)

On the other hand, the whole idea of the Confucian grand unity (*datong* 大同) in the Cultural China construct should not be taken for granted without paying due consideration to the will of all groups, whether dominant or subordinate, in the People’s Republic of China. This so-called “grand unity” emphasized in the Cultural China construct, far from being a voluntary federalization by amalgamation, has always been a top-down arrangement in the millennia of China’s history, shaped mostly by conquest and domination. As Mikhail Gorbachev pointed out in the case of the former Soviet Union, the disintegration of such an entity represents the dissolution not of a country, but of the command structure that has long gone against the genuine will of the constituent nationalities of the empire (Gorbachev, 1991).<sup>17</sup>

According to the 2000 census, Uyghurs are but only 45 per cent of the population of Xinjiang although the region was organized as a “Uygur Autonomous Region”. Even if we add on the Kazakhs (7 per cent) and the Hui (5 per cent), Uyghurs and their Muslim co-regionalists contribute only to about 57 per cent of the population. Lin Huihsiang, writing in 1936, provided the following information:

Today’s Hui 回 (Muslim) *tsu* 族 (nationalities) are mainly found in Hsinchiang 新疆, Kansu 甘肅 and Shaanhsi 陝西 – and mostly in Hsinchiang [...] the T’uchüeh 突厥 (i.e. Turk) *tsu* were earlier found to the north of the Hsiungnu 匈奴 (Huns), later moved southward into Mongolia.

After the conquest of Huike 回紇 by Hsiachiaszu 黠戛斯 (Kirghiz), they moved southwest into the regions of Hsinchiang and Kansu. After the suppression of the Muslim rebellion, Hsinchiang was changed into a province in the Eighth Year of the Reign of the Ch'ing dynasty Emperor Kuanghsü 清光緒八年 (i.e. 1882). Today the Muslim population there still constitutes eighty per cent.

(Lin, 1936: 42-43)

If Lin's data were accurate, today's Uyghur (and other Muslim) population in Xinjiang is a far cry from that in the 1930s. On another note, the history of Xinjiang is a history of continuous rebellion and imperial, often brutal, suppression. Lin (1936) wrote:

Islam's entry into Hsinchiang 新疆 began in early 11th Century, but then it was limited to the southwestern corner of the region. The expansion became rather rapid by the Yüan dynasty 元朝. By the time of early Ch'ing dynasty 清朝 the southern part was completely populated by Muslims, who came to expand into the region's north after the time of Emperor Ch'ienlung 乾隆 [...]. Since the conquest of Huike 回紇 by Hsiachiaszu 黠戛斯 (Kirghiz), Muslims had migrated southwest from the north to south of the T'ien-shan (天山) mountain. Since then the T'uchüeh 突厥 (Turk) people have been mostly residing in Hsinchiang. After the conquest of Wei-wuerh 畏吾兒 (i.e. Uighur) by the Mongols, it belonged to Mongol's Chagatai Khan. During the Ming dynasty (明朝) located in this region were Hami 哈密, Huochou 火州, T'ulufan 土魯番 (i.e. Turpan) etc. which were semi-independent, among which the strongest being T'ulufan whose population, other than Muslims, also consisted of Ch'iang 羌, T'ufan 吐蕃 and Mongols [...]. By the time of Emperor Ch'ienlung, Amusana 阿睦撒納 of the Chunkeerh 準葛爾部 (i.e. Dzungaria) rebelled against the Ch'ing government; Muslim leader Hechomu 和卓木 took the opportunity to lead the Muslims to fight for independence from the Ch'ing court but was defeated and killed. Hence the Muslim region again came under Ch'ing rule in the 24th Year of the Reign of Emperor Ch'ienlung 乾隆二十四年 (i.e. 1759) [...]. The next rebellion came in the 25th Year of the Reign of Emperor Chiach'ing 嘉慶二十五年 stemming from Ch'ing officials' persecution of the Muslim people. This revolt led by Changkeerh 張格爾, offspring of Hechomu, was finally crushed by the Ch'ing army in the 7th Year of the Reign of Emperor Taokuang 道光七年 [...]. Muslim uprising occurred again in the 1st Year of the Reign of Emperor T'ungchih 同治初年 and Shaanhsi, Kansu and Hsinchiang almost all achieved independence. Shaanhsi's and Kansu's independence movements were crushed by Tso Tsung'ang 左宗棠 who was sent in the 7th Year of the Reign of Emperor T'ungchih to the western region, who proceeded to crush the independence movement of Hsinchiang in the 2nd Year of the Reign of Emperor Kuanghsü 光緒二年.

(Lin, 1936: 37-41)

That said, the case of Xinjiang is still much more complicated than a simple Muslim struggle for independence against Han colonizers, as Gladney (2003: 24-25) cautioned:

The problems facing Xinjiang, however, are much greater than those of Tibet if it were to become independent. Not only is it more integrated into the rest of China, but the Uyghur part of the population is less than half of the total and primarily located in the south, where there is less industry and natural resources, except for oil [...] however, unless significant investment is found, Tarim oil and energy resources will never be a viable source of independent wealth. Poor past relations between the three main Muslim groups, Uyghur, Kazak, and Hui, suggest that conflicts among Muslims would be as great as those between Muslims and Han Chinese. Most local residents believe that independence would lead to significant conflicts between these groups, along ethnic, religious, urban-rural, and territorial lines.

In fact, influx of ethnic Han into Xinjiang intensified only after the establishment of the People's Republic, with the numbers of Han settlers in Xinjiang rising from less than half a million in the early 1950s to 7.5 million by 2000 and 8.1 million by 2006.<sup>18</sup> On a historical timeline, Han Chinese colonization of the region has only been quite a recent phenomenon with large-scale Han migration into the region in the mid-19th century:

[...] it was not until 1760, and after their defeat of the Mongolian Zungars,<sup>19</sup> that the Manchu Qing dynasty exerted full and formal control over the region, establishing it as their "new dominions" (*Xinjiang*), an administration that had lasted barely 100 years, when it fell to the Yakub Beg rebellion (1864-1877) and expanding Russian influence. Until major migrations of Han Chinese was [sic] encouraged in the mid-nineteenth century, the Qing were mainly interested in pacifying the region by setting up military outposts which supported a vassal-state relationship. Colonization had begun with the migrations of the Han in the mid-nineteenth century, but was cut short by the Yakub Beg rebellion, the fall of the Qing empire in 1910 [...]

(Gladney, 2003: 4)

Such independence movements have not ended with the overthrow of the Manchu dynasty in 1911, as the ensuing warlord era dismembered the region and the nascent republican China faced the danger of losing the territory on various occasions – the short-lived East Turkestan Islamic Republic in 1933 and East Turkestan Republic in 1944 which lasted till 1949 when the People's Liberation Army entered Xinjiang ("peaceful liberation") and the region was incorporated as part of the new People's Republic, later established as the "Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region" on 1st October 1955.

As the Uyghur population dwindled to just 45 per cent today (compare this with Lin's nineteen-thirties figure of about 80 per cent) while large-

scale Han Chinese settlement has caused the latter's proportion to burgeon to 41 per cent<sup>20</sup>, Uyghurs' resentment against what they perceive as the Han Chinese empire's internal colonization and the exploitation of the region's rich resources by the Han Chinese central State is inevitable. Large-scale demographic transfer of members of a country's dominant ethnic group into a minority ethnic region of the country inevitably, for the ethnic minority, raises the spectre of internal colonization, plundering of local resources, dominant cultural assimilation, and unequal resource contest. In the case of Xinjiang, adding to such perception is the historical legacy left by China's use of Xinjiang as the testing ground for its nuclear weapons programme from 1964 to 1996, which according to recent Japanese research results by Professor Jun Takada 高田純, a physicist at the Sapporo 札幌 Medical University, have probably resulted in a "conservative minimum" of 194,000 deaths from related illnesses out of the 1.48 million people who were exposed to radioactive fallout from the testings, 1.2 million people afflicted with leukaemia, solid cancers and fetal damage, including 35,000 newborns who were deformed or handicapped. The 46 nuclear testings over the span of 32 years at Xinjiang's Lop Nur have been disastrous in particular for the ethnic minorities including Uyghurs and Tibetans as wind direction had brought nuclear dust to the Silk Road cities and townships in Xinjiang and Gansu, bringing about cross-generational legacy of cancer affliction – with Xinjiang's cancer rates allegedly 30 to 35 per cent higher than the national average – birth deformities and shorter lifespan.<sup>21</sup>

Similar phenomenon can be observed in Tibet. The Sinicization of Ürümqi is paralleled by the Sinicization of Lhasa 拉萨. The official population figures for Tibet differ much from certain unofficial ones. The official figures have been disputed by the Tibetan government-in-exile who claimed that "accelerating Han population transfer into Tibet [...] has reduced the Tibetan people to a minority in their own land [...] and today] there are over 7.5 million non-Tibetan settlers in Tibet including Chinese and Hui Muslims, compared to six million Tibetans" (Cook and Murray, 2001: 141). However, such allegations of population transfer were rebutted by the Beijing government – according to whose official figures Tibetans constitute 93 per cent of the Tibet's total population – who argued that "the only Han Chinese living in Tibet are specialists who have gone there voluntarily to help in the region's development [...] and they] make up less than five per cent of the population and many of the people are there for only a few years before returning home" (Cook and Murray, 2001: 141). The figure of 93 per cent Tibetans was one given by the 2000 Census. In fact, official data for the year 2005 gave the proportion of Tibetans as high as 95.28 per cent and that of Han as only 3.91 per cent of the total population of Tibet.<sup>22</sup>

## 5. The Inverted Paradigm: State Policy-Induced Ethnogenesis, Reethnicization and Polarization

*J'accuse.* [I accuse.]

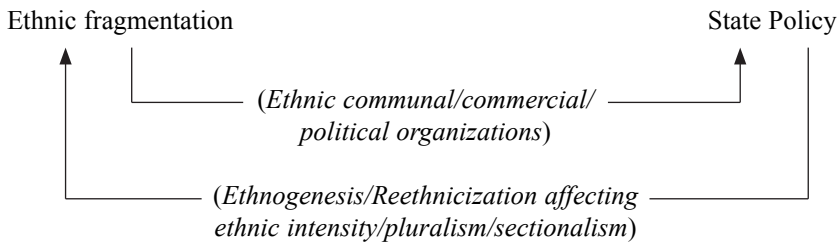
Émile Zola (1840-1902), *L'Aurore*, 13th January 1898

As a comparison with the case of China, let us look at an inverted paradigm in contrast to the discussion so far, using the case of Spain's Andalucía. Andalucía, of course, is Castilian. Nevertheless, what uneven development and public policy can do to fuel regional separatist sentiments is evident even in Andalucía where the population has little ethnolinguistic differences from the Spanish (Castilian) political centre, for while government responds to challenges from ethnic community organizations that seek to influence public policy, "within an inverted and complementary paradigm [...] ethnic communities take shape as response to stimuli which induce a process of ethnogenesis" (Gheorghe, 1991: 842-843). The shockingly rapid emergence since the late 1970s (with the advent of the *Comunidades Autónomas* project) of a politically disciplined and powerful regional cultural identity in Andalucía, which Greenwood (1985) argued to be as authentic as the Basque or Catalan ethnic movement, basically stems from the local people's grievances that they have been subjected to centuries of exploitation not merely by Andalusian capitalists, but by the Castilian political centre as well. This interesting phenomenon of public policy-induced ethnogenesis evident in the large southern impoverished region of Andalucía, which shares the linguistic identity of the Spanish (Castilian) centre, is the direct result of the post-Franco *Comunidades Autónomas* project. "The rapidity with which a politically disciplined and powerful regional cultural identity has emerged in Andalusia shocked everyone", commented Greenwood (1985: 222-223), "[...] the idea that the Andalusian movement is something qualitatively different from the 'true' ethnic movements in the Basque Country and Catalonia must be exploded."<sup>23</sup>

This phenomenon of public policy-induced ethnogenesis is also evident in the increasing support since the 1980s for Italy's *Lega Nord* (Northern League), whose leader has declared the aim to set up a state called "Padania" free from Rome's rule and from union with the poorer South.<sup>24</sup> Such centrifugal development in Italy, of course, reflects the increasing resentment of the more prosperous North for having to subsidize the poorer South and a tax revolt against Rome.<sup>25</sup> Although from the ethnolinguistic perspective the country is relatively homogeneous (with small Sard, Friul, German and Occitan minorities), Italy's late but rapid unification has left a legacy of widespread "pseudo-ethnic" sectionalism, which is no less ascriptive than that Greenwood found in Andalucía, across its numerous regions and compartments, partly reflected linguistically in the local *dialetti* or koinés.



Figure 3 Interrelationship of Ethnic Fragmentation and State Policy



In the case of China, such public policy-induced ethnogenesis is evident in, for instance, the most assimilated of minorities, the Zhuang whose ethnic consciousness was virtually created by the Han-dominated central Communist Party-State in the early 1950s<sup>26</sup>, who have begun to press for preferential treatments from the central government, as the country's deadly race towards economic prosperity continues to widen economic disparities between the ethnic minorities and the Han majority, making it more and more challenging to manage ethnic nationalism and ethnoregionalism in the People's Republic (Figure 3)<sup>27</sup>, as well as having dire implications for the prospects and consequences of further decentralization and possible federalization, a critical dimension to which this paper will later return.

## 6. Western Regional Development Programme

It is a fact that Beijing has been intensifying efforts in developing the western region of China, including Xinjiang, in particular after the launching of the Western Regional Development Programme (*xibu dakaiifa* 西部大开发). However, such heavy economic support and financing of disputed or ill-integrated regions for national territorial cohesion is nothing unique. For instance, ethnopolitical conflict brought about by the annexation of East Timor obviously had an effect on fiscal allocation in Indonesia in the years before Timor-Leste (East Timor) officially freed herself in May 2002 from more than two decades of Indonesian occupation and became a sovereign state. In fact, as Shah and Qureshi (1994) showed, the Indonesian "province" of Timor Timur (East Timor) received the highest per capita general-purpose central transfer among all Indonesian provinces (Shah and Qureshi, 1994: 62). Timor Timur, together with Irian Jaya (a province with strong secessionist sentiment), also received special preference in SDO ("subsidy for autonomous regions") grant allocation (*ibid.*: 65). It could of course be argued that Timor Timur was Indonesia's poorest "province" – both Timor Timur and Nusa Tenggara Timur had the lowest per capita non-oil Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of just about

Table 3 China's Western Region: Major Economic Indicators, 2005

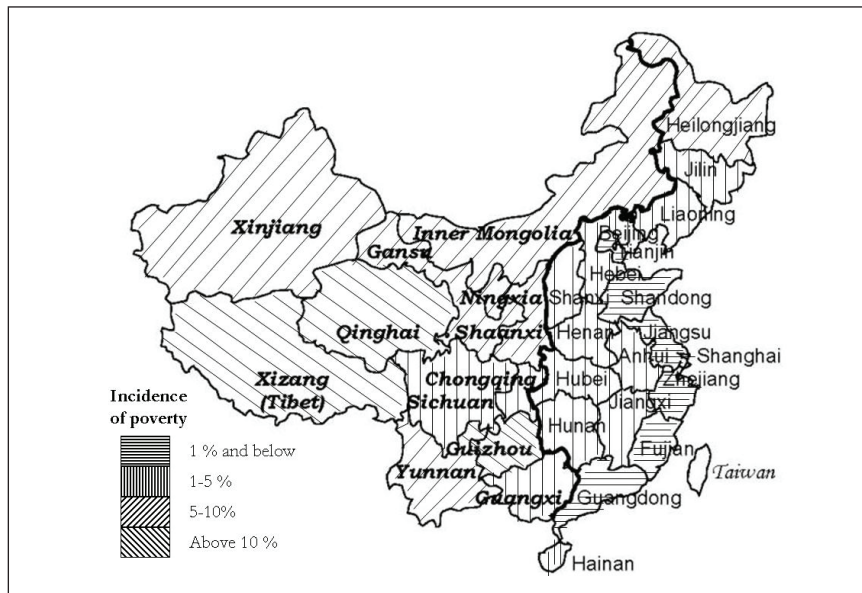
	GDP (hundred million yuan)	GDP growth (%)	GDP per capita (yuan)	Fixed capital formation (hundred million yuan)	Urban income per capita (yuan)	Urban income per capita growth (%)	Rural income per capita (yuan)	Rural income per capita growth (%)
Sichuan	7385.1	12.6	8440.1	3462.1	8386.0	8.8	2802.8	8.6
Guangxi	4063.3	12.7	8762.0	1775.9	8916.8	9.0	2494.7	8.2
Inner Mongolia	3822.8	21.6	16026.0	2687.8	9137.0	10.3	2989.0	14.7
Shaanxi	3674.8	12.6	9844.0	1980.5	8272.0	9.4	2052.0	6.9
Yunnan	3472.3	9.0	7833.0	1743.0	9265.9	4.5	2041.8	6.5
Chongqing	3069.1	11.5	10978.0	2006.3	10244.0	10.2	2809.0	11.9
Xinjiang	2609.0	10.9	13030.0	1352.3	8100.0	8.0	2482.0	10.6
Guizhou	1942.0	11.5	4957.0	1014.7	8147.1	10.6	1877.0	5.2
Gansu	1928.1	11.7	7341.0	874.5	8086.8	9.6	1980.0	6.9
Ningxia	599.4	10.3	10308.0	444.7	8093.6	12.1	2509.0	6.3
Qinghai	543.2	12.2	10043.0	367.2	8057.9	10.1	2165.1	8.0
Tibet	250.6	12.2	9098.0	196.2	8411.0	2.6	2078.0	11.7

Note: Rural poor for whole of China in 2004 totaled 26.10 million, with incidence of poverty 2.8 per cent.  
Source: *Zhongguo Fazhan Shuzi Ditu*, 2006, p. 225, and *Zhongguo Xibu Jingji Fazhan Baogao (2007)*, p. 39, Table 5.

360,000 rupiah or US\$180 (*ibid.*: 54, 254, Tables 3.8, A5.10). Furthermore, Timor Timur (and Irian Jaya) had the lowest proportion of own-source receipts in total current receipts and Timor Timur had the lowest proportion of aggregate own revenues of local governments in total current revenues and proportion of own revenue in total receipts (*ibid.*: 84, 86) that qualified the “province” for higher central transfers<sup>28</sup>, but the continuing destitution of the poverty-stricken region was very much a result of the occupation and brutal military campaign against the independence movement.

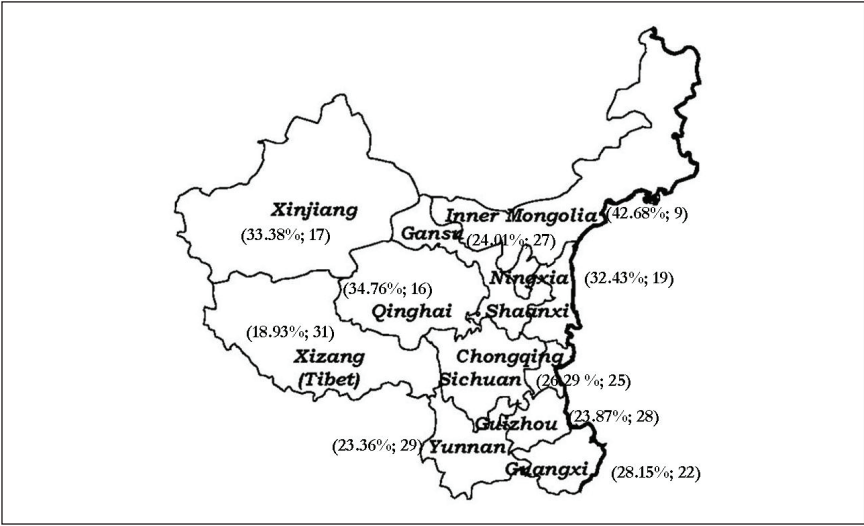
It is also a fact that Xinjiang has not fared badly in development and modernization in recent years. In terms of GDP, Table 3 shows that Xinjiang has had a moderate performance among the provinces/zizhiqu/zhixiashi of the western region and fared much better than Tibet which has been the worst performer. In terms of GDP per capita, Xinjiang is the best among them. Rural poverty is still a serious problem for Xinjiang, with rural incidence of poverty in the bracket of 5-10 per cent but not as bad as Tibet and Qinghai whose rural incidence of poverty is above 10 per cent (Figure 4). In terms of urbanization, Xinjiang is also a moderate performer, ranking 17th among the country’s 31 provinces/zizhiqu/zhixiashi<sup>29</sup>, compared to the least urbanized Tibet (ranked 31st) (Figure 5). Other key indicators, shown in Figures 6-10, reveal a similar picture.

Figure 4 China: Distribution of Rural Poor



Source: Chen (2006: 176), Table 7-1. Data are for year 2003.

Figure 5 China: Urbanization in Ethnic Zizhiqu and Multiethnic Provinces  
(Rate of urbanization; National ranking in rate of urbanization)



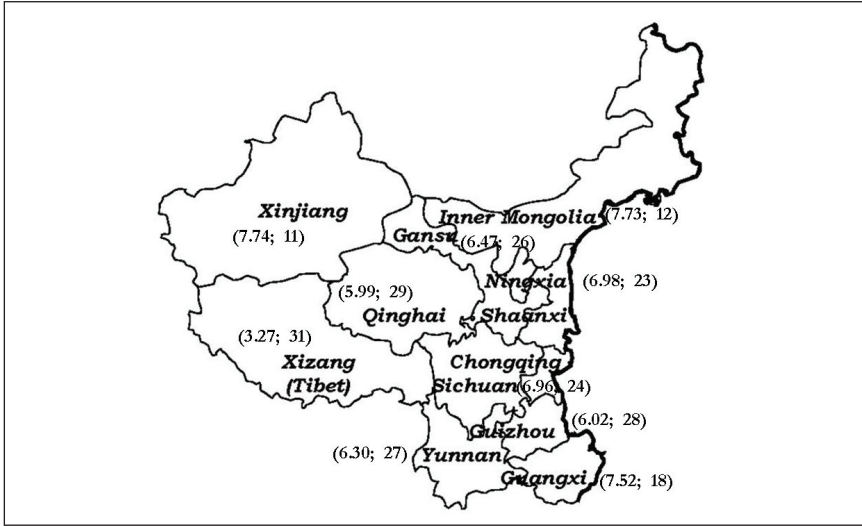
Source: *Zhongguo Minzu Fazhan Baogao, 2001-2006*, p. 232, Table 18 (original source: *Zhongguo Renkou Wenhua Suzhi Baogao, 2004*).

Figure 6 China: Gini by Province/Zizhiqu/Zhixiashi



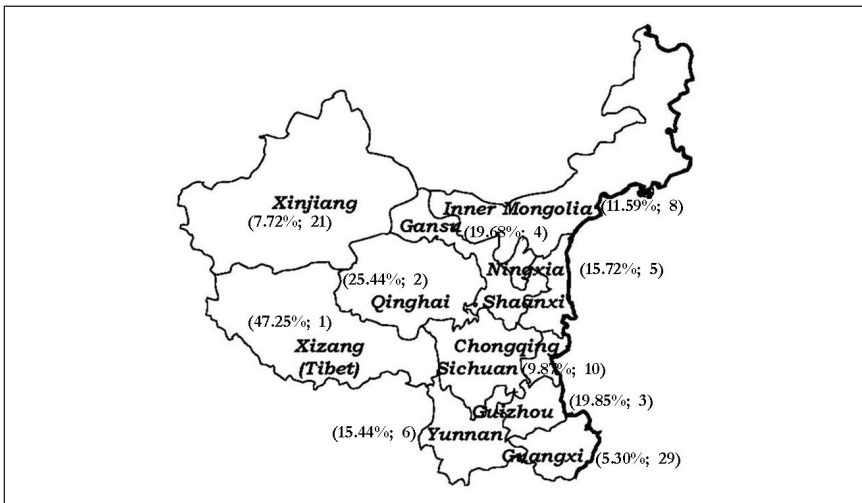
Source: Huang and Niu (2007: 161-162), Table 5-3(2).

Figure 7 China: Average Education Level in Ethnic Zizhiqu and Multiethnic Provinces, 2000 (Years of schooling; National ranking of education level)



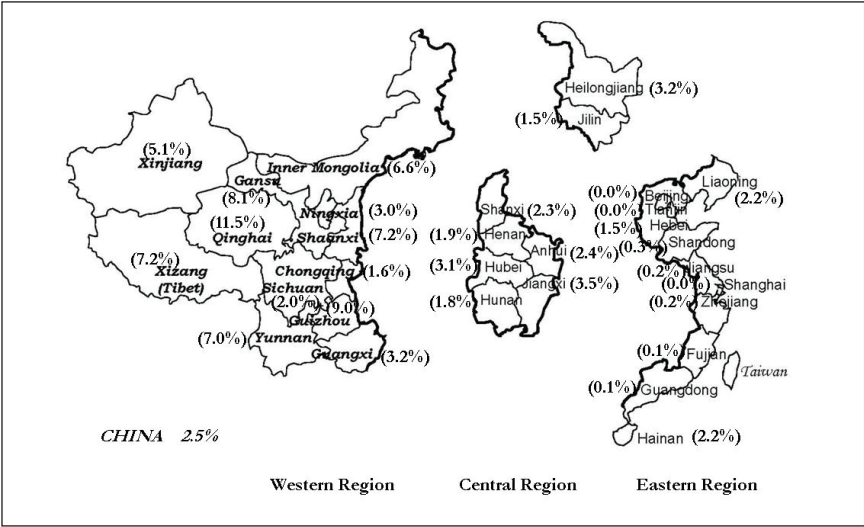
Source: *Zhongguo Minzu Fazhan Baogao, 2001-2006*, p. 231, Table 17 (original source: *Zhongguo Renkou Wenhua Suzhi Baogao, 2004*).

Figure 8 China: Illiteracy in Ethnic Zizhiqu and Multiethnic Provinces, 2000 (Illiteracy rate; National ranking of illiteracy rate)



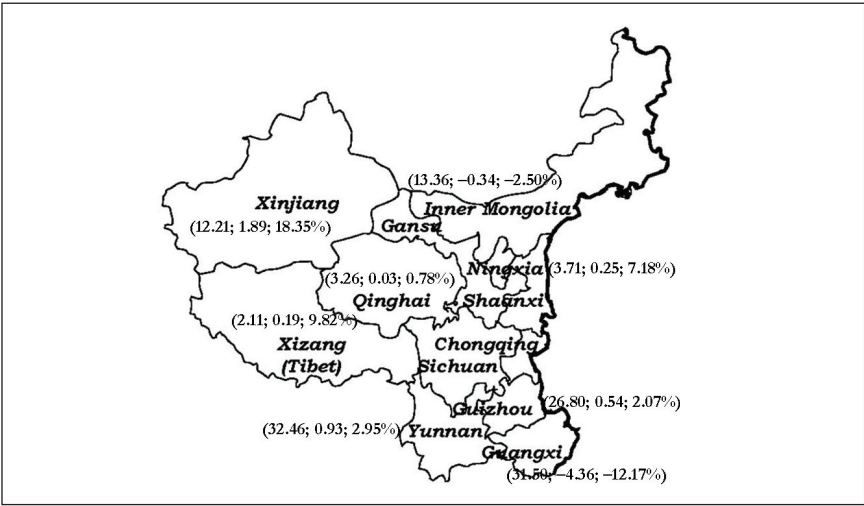
Source: *Zhongguo Minzu Fazhan Baogao, 2001-2006*, p. 230, Table 16 (original source: *Zhongguo Renkou Wenhua Suzhi Baogao, 2004*).

Figure 9 China: Incidence of Absolute Poverty by Province/Zizhiqu/ Zhixiashi, 2005



Source: *Zhongguo Fazhan Baogao 2007*, p. 39, Table 2.3.

Figure 10 China: Population Engaged in Agriculture in Ethnic Zizhiqu and Multiethnic Provinces (Million people in 2000; Growth in million 1990-2000; Growth rate)



Source: *Zhongguo Minzu Fazhan Baogao, 2001-2006*, p. 232, Table 19 (data from the 2000 Population Census).

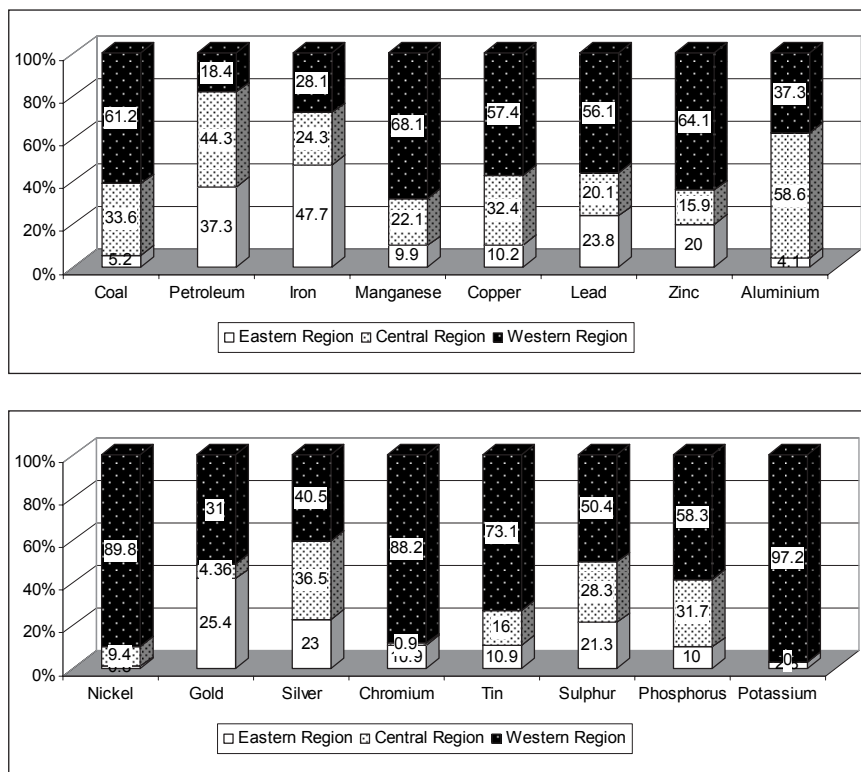
However, implementing the western regional development project within a cautious political framework is not without risks either. First, with strong constraints in the devolvement of central power, it could be difficult to coordinate the interests of the central and local governments over the power of authorization and permissions and to determine how far the right to independent development could go. Besides that, it may not be easy to adjust the interests of local governments over limited financial resources and projects to be implemented. Finally, there is the fact that 80 per cent of the ethnic minorities in China live in the western regions and national border areas where the new regional development strategy is targeted. Without accompanying decentralization of political power and the conferring of substantial degree of regional autonomy in the control and use of local resources, ethnic minorities may perceive the central State's projects as attempts at internal colonization – for instance, the mixed feelings of the Tibetans towards the Qinghai-Tibet railway – leading to their outright opposition to the whole regional development strategy itself, thus exacerbating the already simmering ethnoregional tensions, even culminating in repeated disturbances such as the deadly 14th March 2008 riots in Tibet and 5th July 2009 riots in Xinjiang. Paradoxically, further devolution in China that seems to be the logical extension of the already decentralist process of economic reform may yet be arrested by the lack of the will for political change – which is crucial to the maintenance of long-term stability – due to the illusory confidence brought about by the economic success itself.

## 7. Regional Development and Resource Politics

In a way as in Spain where ethnic division is territorial with her ethnic minorities concentrated in Catalonia (*Catalunya/Cataluña*) and the Basque Country (*Euskadi/País Vasco*) which constitute the economic backbone of the country, in China where the major ethnic division is also largely territorial, the country's major ethnic minority groups including the Uyghurs and Tibetans are concentrated in the resource-rich western provinces and zizhiqu (Figure 11).<sup>30</sup> It was forecasted that by 2010, the western region's coal, petroleum, natural gas and a whole range of abundant mineral resources will be adequate to guarantee China's economic development or exports, and hence the western region – being the major energy source for the whole of China, providing 34 per cent of the nation's coal, 78 per cent of hydroelectricity and 59 per cent of natural gas (*Zhongguo Xibu Jingji Fazhan Baogao 2006*, p. 268) – is poised to become the country's important reserve base of strategic resources.

The geographical demarcation of the western region for the *xibu dakaifa* programme was nevertheless not an easy process, since being incorporated

Figure 11 China: Distribution of Mineral Reserves  
(Region as Proportion of All China)



Source: *Zhongguo Diqu Jingji Fazhan Zhanlüe Yanjiu*, 2003, p. 122, Table 7-4.  
(Computed from “Quanguo Kuangchan Chuliang Hui Zongbiao 全国矿产储量汇总表”. Calculated with reserve volume as at end of 1997.)

as a part of the western region means that the regional government concerned would be entitled to receive various benefits, including priorities in obtaining projects funded by the central government and other fiscal subsidies. That explains why regional governments all over the country at that time of demarcation were swept into a frenzy trying to get their regions classified as “western” – in a course of events resembling the *fiebre autonómica* (autonomy fever) when the Spanish Comunidades Autónomas project was first introduced after the death of the *Caudillo* – no matter how unconvincing their arguments were. However, given the fiscal constraints of the central government, continued fiscal help from the central government could be problematic. Hence, fund-raising would depend on the ability to attract domestic- and foreign-capital enterprises. That explains why many regional



governments had raced to announce preferential policy measures as soon as the proposal was made for the *xibu dakaiifa* strategy (*IDE Spot Survey*, 2001: 24). Such interregional scrambling for future benefits even at the early stage of the strategy can provide a glimpse into the potential resource contest between regions, especially given the understandable difficulty to coordinate and adjust the interests of regional governments over the distribution of the resources for the strategy.

Furthermore, the reassertion of old regionalisms and the development of new regionalisms in particular with an ethnic overtone have always constituted a challenge to countries facing an inevitable long-term prospect of decentralization and devolution, as apparent in the *fiebre autonómica* that threatened to bring about the virtual disappearance of the central Spanish State when the country's *Comunidades Autónomas* project was first introduced after the death of the *Caudillo*. The undertaking of costly projects, such as the creation of regional public television networks, regional institutes for business development and promotion, the development of major infrastructures, etc., by the Autonomous Communities in a concerted effort to compete with each other in the levels of performance and achievement, for political legitimacy and consolidation, have served to further exacerbate the existing rivalry over public resources and worsen the conflict between the Communities as well as between the centre and the periphery, with significant implications for the development of ethnoterritorial consciousness and interethnic relations in Spain. Even the fact that the Han Chinese command an unequivocal majority of 92 per cent of the total population of China needs not render the country immune to such threats.

The following section aims to take this discussion a step further by analyzing the socioracial problems of China's ethnic regions, with particular reference to the case of Xinjiang, with regard to the possible theoretical implications of the impact of continued Han Chinese influx on interethnic relations which will in turn affect regional stability in the objective environment created by the State's ethnic and regional policies.

## 8. From Ürümqi to Lhasa: Perception of Superordinate-Subordinate Power-Size Configuration

One important aspect of the numerical structure of ethnicity refers to the role played by the relative size of ethnic groups in the societal power structure. The superordinate-subordinate relationship in a multiethnic society is related to the concept of "minority" which avoids some of the definitional problems accompanying the concepts of "race" and "ethnicity", especially those related to the nature and significance of different types of group markers. The concept of "minority", instead, focuses on the size and strength of the groups involved,

in terms of variations in the economic, political and social balance of power. Wirth (1945: 347) defined a minority as “a group of people who, because of their physical or cultural characteristics, are singled out from the others in the society in which they live for differential and unequal treatment, and who therefore regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination”. This definition has been criticized because it makes the existence of minorities completely dependent on the feelings of minority group members, despite his caveat that minorities “objectively occupy a disadvantageous position in society” (*ibid.*: 348). Wirth’s emphasis on the disadvantageous social position of the minority leads to his neglect of the latter’s numerical relationship to the wider society. For him, collective perception of their distinctive disadvantages is the decisive criterion that distinguishes minorities from other subordinate populations irrespective of their number, nature and disadvantage, as a people “whom we regard as a minority may actually, from a numerical standpoint, be a majority” (*ibid.*: 349).

Disregard for the numerical aspect, in addition to the importance attached to subjective definitions of the situation by the minority, leads to the view that every instance of group conflict in society is by definition, a “minority problem” (van Amersfoort, 1978: 219). Many researchers besides Wirth have shown the same disregard for the numerical aspect, e.g. Wagley and Harris (1967), preferring to emphasize the power dimension of the “minority” concept. Nevertheless, whether the concept of a minority group depends upon actual numbers, is more than a matter of definition, since power and numerical dimensions are ultimately linked to each other. As Stone (1985: 43-44) remarked:

[...] this basic demographic fact [of actual numbers] will affect many different aspects of race relations, not least the question of the “costs” for the dominant group of promoting racial justice: whether such policies can be pursued in a relatively peaceful, evolutionary manner, or whether they are more likely to lead to persistent conflict and violence.

When analyzing the possible impact of public policy on ethnic conflict, such disregard for the numerical aspect diminishes any projected result. Smith (1987: 343-4) emphasized this numerical dimension in his critique of Wirth’s definition:

To lump together all disadvantaged populations irrespective of size without prior study of the relationships between their demographic ratios, organisation and differences of collective status, assumes in advance the irrelevance of these variables or the randomness of their distribution. Such assimilation of demographic fractions and majorities is sociologically unsound because the situations of aggregates often differ as functions of their relative size and organisation or lack of it.

Relating the numerical dimension directly to the question of political power, van Amersfoort (1978: 221) noted that in a modern democratic state the “characteristic problem for a minority group is not so much that it is difficult to ensure formal rights, but that the numerical situation restricts the possibility of translating such rights into social influence”. A useful redefinition of the concept of “minority” is that by Schermerhorn (1970: 14):

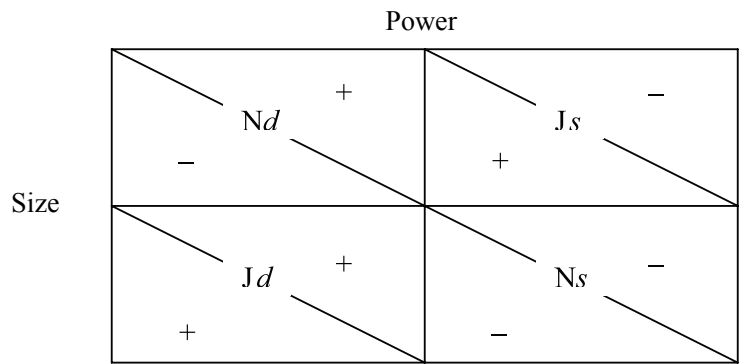
Combining the characteristics of size, power, and ethnicity, we [...] use “minority group” to signify any ethnic group [...] that [...] forms less than half the population of a given society, but is an appreciable subsystem with limited access to roles and activities central to the economic and political institutions of the society.

For Schermerhorn only those subordinate ethnic groups that are numerical minorities of nation-states qualify as “minority groups”. He thus implicitly endorsed all other criteria set by Wagley and Harris (1967: 10) to distinguish (ethnic) minorities, whose membership must be transmitted by rules of descent and endogamy, from other disadvantaged collectivities (whose disadvantages are due to social mobility, e.g. refugees, captives, and other disadvantaged categories such as women, slaves, proletarians and peasants). The “ethnic group” is defined by Schermerhorn as “a collectivity within a larger society having real or putative common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements defined as the epitome of their peoplehood”, and the “dominant group” as “that collectivity within a society which has preeminent authority to function both as guardians and sustainers of the controlling value system, and as prime allocators of rewards in the society” (Schermerhorn, 1970: 12-3).

For a fundamentally bi-ethnic region like Xinjiang<sup>31</sup>, it is apparent that the relationship between State policy and ethnic conflict and antagonism is influenced by the subordinate group’s aspirations, the dominant group’s orientations and their dynamic interaction. Figure 12 constructs a power-size configuration of ethnic groups similar to Moscovici’s diagram of group power-influence configuration (Moscovici, 1985: 26). Based on this paradigm, a typology of multiethnic societies can be constructed, as illustrated in Figure 13.

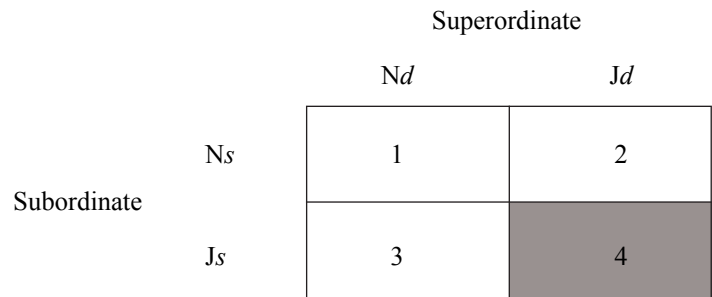
Excluding case 4 which is by definition not applicable, Figure 13 shows a threefold typology of multiethnic societies. Case 2 represents a *Jd-Ns* type of society which combines a subordinate demographic minority with a dominant demographic majority – a typical example is China as a whole with her demographically (92 per cent) and politically dominant Han Chinese majority. Case 3 is an *Nd-Js* society in which the numerical majority is dominated by a demographic minority – as the local Uyghurs and other real

Figure 12 Power-Size Configuration of Ethnic Groups



Notes: *Jd* = dominant demographic majority (Schermerhorn’s “majority group”)  
*Js* = subordinate demographic majority (“mass subjects”)  
*Nd* = dominant demographic minority (“élite”)  
*Ns* = subordinate demographic minority (“minority group”)

Figure 13 Typology of Multiethnic Societies



Note: Typology based on the paradigm presented in Figure 12.

and exotic minorities in Xinjiang possibly perceive themselves in relation to the minority Han Chinese settlers (around 40 per cent) backed by the Han Chinese-dominated central State, hence as an extension of the Han Chinese-dominated central State power. The subordinate-superordinate intergroup relationship in a society with no obvious demographic majority (an *Nd-Ns* society) is represented by case 1 – the mainly bi-ethnic relations in Xinjiang between the Uyghurs (about 45 per cent) and Han Chinese (about 40 per cent) or if we take the estimates of the Tibetan government-in-exile, the relations between the Tibetans (about 44 per cent) and Han Chinese settlers (together with the minority Hui settlers totaling about 56 per cent). If the non-Han

nationalities see the Han influx into Xinjiang as in a way an extension of the Han dominance of the central State, to them the Xinjiang society then belongs to the *Nd-Ns* category, while the continued influx of the Han following increasing economic prosperity of the region is seen as moving the society towards a *Jd-Ns* configuration, or probably it could have already to a certain extent reached that stage, if some unofficial data on population composition are accurate. Indeed, if we look at cities – the centres of prosperity – while the populations of Kashgar/Qeshqer (Kashi 喀什) and Hotan/Xoten (Hetian 和田) are still in the main Uyghur, that of the capital city Ürümqi/Ürümchi (Wulumuqi 乌鲁木齐) is already almost 80 per cent Han.<sup>32</sup> Official data, in fact, show that Ürümqi's population is currently 12.62 per cent Uyghur and 74.70 per cent Han.<sup>33</sup> Similar situation is also apparent in Tibet and Lhasa.

Schermerhorn's concept of a minority mentioned above, which he redefined as a variety of ethnic group, is part of the fourfold typology he developed to take account of the numerical and the power dimensions (Schermerhorn, 1970: 13):

Figure 14 Schermerhorn's Fourfold Typology of Dominant-Subordinate Relations

Dominant Groups			
	<i>Size</i>	<i>Power</i>	
Group A	+	+	Majority Group
Group B	–	+	Élite
Subordinate Groups			
	<i>Size</i>	<i>Power</i>	
Group C	+	–	Mass subjects
Group D	–	–	Minority Group

The fourfold typology illustrated in Figure 14 includes not only “majority group” and “minority group”, which are dominant and subordinate respectively in terms of both size and power, but also “élite” and “mass subjects” where numerical superiority and power do not coincide. Societies that combine the subordinate numerical minorities (“minority groups”) with dominant demographic majorities (“majority groups”) (D+A, such as China as a whole), are contraposed as the structural opposites of those in which the numerical majority of “mass subjects” are dominated by a demographic minority, the “élite” (C+B, such as Xinjiang and Tibet, if one sees the minority Han settlers as an extension of the Han Chinese-dominated central State power). While it is undeniable that the typology provides a comprehensive picture of the dominant-subordinate relationship, the C+B case, other than

cases of internal colonization of a country's ethnic regions, is rare in today's world after the demise of Western colonialism in the Third World and the end of White rule in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and South Africa. Nevertheless, the fact that such configuration is rare other than internal colonization does not imply its total disappearance – two obvious examples are Rwanda and Burundi where the Hutu majorities are still politically dominated by the Tutsi minorities.

Cases 2 and 3 in Figure 13 thus correspond to Schermerhorn's AD and BC configurations respectively. However, since societies containing disadvantaged demographic minorities do not necessarily have the complementary majorities that Schermerhorn postulated (e.g. Niger, Nigeria, Liberia, Benin, see Smith, 1986), the inclusion of case 1 is necessary, examples of which as we have seen above are China's Xinjiang and possibly Tibet.

Such a typology can be considered exhaustive, since "race relations are essentially group power contests" (Baker, 1978: 316) wherein symmetrical power relationships among groups are rare and often transient:

Whatever the power relationship (symmetrical, where both are equal, or asymmetrical, where one is dominant), each group may initiate action or respond to the acts, or anticipated acts, of others [...] Given changing circumstances over time, group power capabilities (measured in terms of group resources, additive resources, mobilization capabilities and situations) may alter, thereby transforming the character of group power relations. At any given moment in time (T1) the power of A may be equal to that of B (symmetrical), at a later period (T2) that of A may be superior to that of B (asymmetrical, with A dominant), or at another point (T3) that of A may be less than that of B (asymmetrical, with A subordinate).

(Baker, 1978: 317-8)

The infrequency of a symmetrical power relationship was also noted by Hoetink in his study of slavery and race relations in the Americas:

A race problem exists where two or more racially different groups belong to one social system and where one of these conceives the other as a threat on any level or in any context [...] One of the groups will commonly be perceived and perceive itself as dominant; the chances that two racially different groups within one society would attain an equilibrium of power, though not absent, are exceedingly small.

(Hoetink, 1973: 91)

Hoetink (1973: 47-8) basically saw the multiethnic horizontally layered structure as a special form of *Herrschaftsüberlagerung* – "a stratification consisting of at least two layers of which the upper layer has, as it were, moved over the lower one (by military conquest, colonial usurpation, and so forth) or the lower layer has been pushed under by the upper one (by

subjugation, the importation of forced labour, and the like)". In societies with such horizontal ethnic division, stimulation of solidarities based on economic or class position may have an aggravating, rather than an ameliorating, effect on ethnic conflict. By contrast, in those societies where ethnic divisional lines between the main population segments run vertically, it is likely that a functional relationship between economic differentiation and the increase of interethnic (horizontal) solidarities, such as those based on economic position, will emerge. These foster intercommunication and may serve to mitigate existing ethnic antagonisms. The two patterns of ethnic division are conceptually linked to the two different types of plural society – the hierarchic plurality (based on differential incorporation) and segmental plurality (based on equivalent or segmental incorporation). A society may combine both these modes of incorporation and form a complex plurality. Smith (1986: 198) noted that the segmental and differential modes of incorporation generate quite distinct ethnic tensions and problems. Hoetink (1973: 146-7) linked the two different patterns of ethnic division to the stability of multiethnic societies:

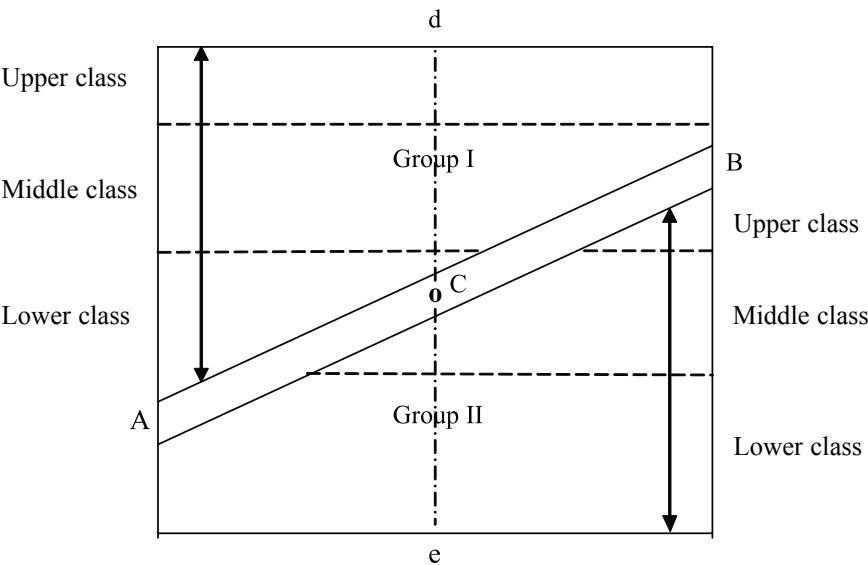
It is interesting that the modern societies that often are put forward as examples of reasonably well-functioning cultural heterogeneity, such as Belgium, Switzerland, Great Britain, and the Soviet Union, all have vertical cultural boundaries, to the point that their cultural segments even have territories of their own with a certain degree of cultural and sometimes political autonomy. Although European history shows many cases of repression, expulsion, or political elimination of such territorially limited cultural minorities, and although it would be naïve to underestimate the still-existing cultural and political tensions in countries like Belgium or Great Britain, it is correct to assume that a minimum of horizontal interpenetration and communication gives these systems a certain viability.

To this list, Hoetink added Suriname, Guiana and Trinidad.

## 9. Xinjiang and Tibet: Perception of Interethnic Power Shift in the Ethnic Regions

Nevertheless, symmetrical power relationship between groups in a society is rare and even if it emerges, tends to be transient, as observed by Hoetink, cited in the preceding section. For various reasons ranging from demographic growth to economic ethos to social mobility, one of the groups usually achieves dominance in the long run, thus pivoting the vertical lines of ethnic division into horizontal ones, as illustrated in Figure 15 which represents the relative positions of ethnic and class categories, but not their relative sizes, and expresses a combination of the horizontal and vertical principles of social differentiation – similar to that presented by Warner (1936) in his caste-class configuration for the US Deep South.

Figure 15 Vertical v Horizontal Ethnic Division



The diagonal boundary A-B incorporates the status gap and divide ethnic group I from ethnic group II (Warner’s “castes”). The two double-headed vertical arrows indicate that movement up and down the class ladders within each group can and does occur, but there is no movement across the ethnic boundary A-B (Warner’s “caste line”). Han Chinese penetration into Xinjiang and Tibet under the CCP rule would have at first created a temporary vertical ethnic boundary positioned at d-e, indicating a system of combined equality and separation – the upper class of one ethnic group (Uyghur/Tibetan) would be equivalent to that of the other (Han), while the lower classes in each of the parallel groups would also be of the same social status. However, a possible perception of the non-Han nationalities is that the tilting of the ethnic boundary as shown in Figure 15 into the position A-B would have occurred somewhere along the timeline as, being an extension of the politico-economic power of the Han-dominated central State, Han economic dominance in these ethnic regions grew due to various factors including political, economic and cultural environmental preconditions, initial endowments, long-established networks, etc.<sup>34</sup> With the ethnic line tilted in the way shown in the diagram, within each class level to which they have risen, members of group II (Uyghur/Tibetan) are thought of as socially inferior to members of group I (Han) of the same class, until as individuals they become assimilated (Sinicized) by the latter. It is a perception of the non-Han ethnic people that they are often looked upon as backward, dirty, lazy and superstitious by the dominant Han who pride themselves on assiduity and having a “5000-year culture”. Marginalized by



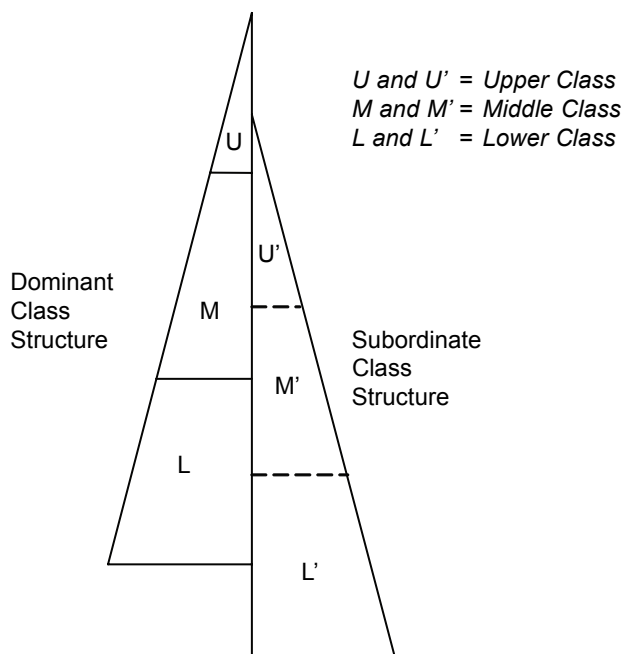
centuries of Han Chinese imperial expansion, China's ethnic minorities have historically been viewed as *manyi* 蠻夷, i.e. "barbarians", and it was only after the revolution that the "dog" radical 犭 – implying sub-humanity – in most of the Han Chinese names given to the ethnic minority groups was eventually replaced with a "human" radical 亻. Paradoxically parts of the CCP's affirmative action policies for minorities such as exemption from the one-child policy, employment quotas and in particular legal leniency on minority offenders (in non-political cases) have added to the negative stereotyping of ethnic minorities in the eyes of the dominant Han population.

Returning to the configuration in Figure 15, it should be noted that a substantial degree of horizontal interpenetration and communication across the ethnic line is indeed possible and in fact necessary for the viability of the system, thus compromising the sharpness of the line A-B as a boundary. On the other hand, if the ethnic boundary is pushed further round its axis (C) towards a horizontal position, one group then becomes unequivocally dominant and the other, subordinate – the exact power distribution and extent of dominance depend on the skewness, i.e. the angle of slant of the ethnic boundary. The test of the existence of a superordinate-subordinate relationship is to verify a group's dominant behaviour towards the other within the same class.

Alternatively, as Marden and Meyer (1962: 42) did for the United States, the structure of differentiation can be comprehensively expressed by superimposing the class pyramid of the subordinate ethnic group upon that of the dominant community (Figure 16). The former is then dropped less than a full horizontal segment to express the inferior position of each class segment of the subordinate group to others within the class. Such a representation could of course be just a simplification of a real-world phenomenon, as the latter is often complicated by the phenomena of class compromise and clientelism<sup>35</sup>. However, a rejection of race and class reductionisms should provide a more rational theoretical foundation to analyze the complex relationship between the variables of ethnic diversity, class structure, and the role of the State.

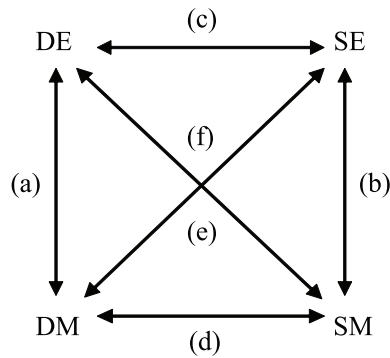
Seen from another angle, in contrast to the vulgar Weberian perspective which argues that the increased ability of a bureaucratic State to realize internally generated goals will reduce the power of all societal groups "outside" the State, Poulantzian neo-Marxism posits that an "autonomous" State, capable of wide ranging and coherent interventions in socioeconomic relations, increases the social power of the dominant class, whose objective and needs it necessarily functions to meet (Evans, Rueschemeyer and Skocpol, 1985). A dominant ethnic faction (Han) whose emergence in the ethnic regions is depicted earlier as inevitable in Figure 15, thus, in line with the latter theory, would be served by a powerful State (the country's Han-dominated one-party central State) whose interests it concurs in.

Figure 16 Marden and Meyer's Model of Dominant-Subordinate Relations and Class Structure



Meanwhile, interethnic socioeconomic inequalities in ethnic regions like Xinjiang and Tibet are playing an important role in accentuating interethnic resentment and discord through expanding social distance, while contradictions, as illustrated in Figure 17, generated between incompatible class fractional identity and ethnic allegiance tend to breed discontent and instability. With D denoting the dominant ethnic group, S subordinate ethnic group, E élite and M masses respectively, the vertical division in Figure 17 shows the dominant-subordinate ethnic grouping, while the horizontal one indicates the élite-masses socioeconomic class grouping. Three types of relations are evident here: *vertical relations*, between dominant élite and their masses (a), and subordinate élite and their masses (b); *horizontal relations*, between dominant élite and their subordinate counterpart (c), and dominant masses and their subordinate counterpart (d); *diagonal relations*, between dominant élite and subordinate masses (e) and subordinate élite and dominant masses (f). Intra-ethnic relations are shown by vertical arrows, interethnic ones by the horizontal and diagonal. While intra-ethnic relations in Xinjiang between the dominant (Han) élite and dominant (Han) masses (DE-DM) represent an extension of the overall intra-Han relations of the country, the SE-SM relations are between the ethnic minority élite (Uyghur cadres and

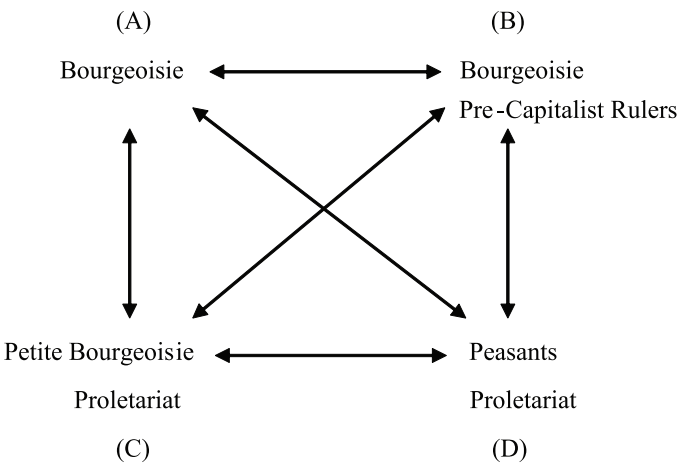
Figure 17 Ethnic and Class Relations



other Uyghur élites co-opted by the State) and the ethnic minority (Uyghur) masses who may perceive the former as cronies of the Han-dominated central State, as reflected in the Uyghur economics professor Ilham Tohti's accusation against Nur Bekri (Baikeli 白克力), chairman of the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, in the former's blog "Uighur Online" before he was taken away on 7th July 2009.<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, relations between the dominant (Han) élite and the ethnic minority (Uyghur) élite (DE-SE) could be perceived by the latter as being characterized by cronyism and clientelism<sup>37</sup>, while those between the dominant (Han) masses and ethnic minority (Uyghur) masses could be perceived by the latter as representing a projection of the general biases, stereotyping and mistrusts as illustrated earlier in Figure 15. Similar configuration is also applicable to the case of Tibet.

The configuration presented in Figure 17 is in fact based upon Bonacich's (1979: 56-57) configuration of class and ethnic relations resulting from imperialism (Figure 18). While segments A and C in Bonacich's model represent the "imperialist (white) bourgeoisie" and "workers in the imperialist nation" (and segments B and D refer to their non-white counterparts in the colonies and semi-colonies), in the present context they may well be the dominant ethnic bourgeoisie and proletariat whose existence is a direct consequence of internal colonization and closely linked to the interests of the dominant central State and its ruling regime. While Bonacich's model refers to classes in the Marxian sense of the word, Figure 17 refers to "élite" instead. According to Brass (1985: 49), the term "élite" is not a substitute for "class", but refers to formations within ethnic groups (e.g. the aristocratic class) and classes (e.g. the secular élites) that often play critical roles in ethnic mobilization. Each of these élites may choose to act in terms of ethnic or class appeals. What determines their action is neither their ethnicity nor their class, but rather their specific relationship to competing élites in struggles for control

Figure 18 Bonacich's Model of Ethnic and Class Relations Resulting from Imperialism



over their ethnic group, or in competition with persons from other ethnic groups for scarce political and economic benefits and resources.

An editorial of a US daily<sup>38</sup> relates the tourists' perception of Lhasa, Tibet: roadside sellers are Tibetans, shopkeepers are Han; manual labourers are Tibetans, clerical workers are Han; trishaw pullers are Tibetans, taxi drivers are Han; Tibetans or Hui might become mayor or chairperson of the "autonomous region" but the municipal or district secretary is almost always a Han; the Han people frequently get rich whereas the Hui people in the cities are mostly in the process of looking for a job or unemployed *nongmingong* 农民工 (rural-to-urban migrant workers). Seen in terms of such stratification and the rigidity in social mobility, the visibly ethnic patterns of employment and the strong identification of ethnicity with class as exist in China's ethnic regions could lead to a displacement of class-based frustrations by ethnic ones. Furthermore, while class mobilization may act to override ethnic distinctions, ethnic mobilization can obliterate internal class distinctions (Brass, 1985:23):

Elites who seek to gain control over or who have succeeded in gaining control over the state must either suppress and control [...] or establish collaborative alliances with other elites. When elites in conflict lack the bureaucratic apparatus or the instruments of violence to compete effectively, they will use symbolic resources in the struggle. When elites in conflict come from different cultural, linguistic, or religious groups, the symbolic resources used will emphasize those differences.

(Brass, 1985:29-30)

Bonacich's purpose was mainly to show how imperialism complicates class struggle by dividing classes along ethnic lines, and how her "split labour market theory" (Bonacich, 1972) could be invoked to explain such complications. However, the latter may not necessarily emerge in the form of conspicuous ethnic conflict. For instance, not only could élite members of the different ethnic groups who are appointed leaders of the ruling class share a desire to minimize conflict among themselves, but each group could also try to accommodate members from the other group into their respective spheres of predominance.

It is notable in this regard that the championing by former billionaire (China's number eight richest person in *Forbes'* list of 1995 with wealth worth two hundred million yuan) Rabiya Qadir, who was once a CPPCC member, of the Uyghur cause has been doubted by some quarters of the exiled Uyghur community who regard her "being persecuted" to be in reality the result of uneven spoils sharing from government-business collusion (*guan-shang goujie*).

Observations have been made that members of China's ethnic minorities are appointed to leadership positions in the ethnic regions, for instance, in the following comments by Tan (2004):

Contrary to the bash-China writers' portrayal, the minority policy of China is better than most countries, and in fact better than that of the U.S. (in relation to the American Indians) and Malaysia (in relation to the Orang Asli). China's constitution requires minorities to be represented in the local government. Thus, in a Yi majority area the county head has to be a Yi, and a Tibetan in the Tibetan autonomous region. In the one-person one-vote system of democracy practiced in Malaysia that is still largely ethnically based, it is almost impossible for an Orang Asli to be elected in a state or national election. Even where positions are bureaucratically appointed, it is rare, if any, for an Orang Asli to be appointed to such a position. In fact, the main officials of the Department of Orang Asli Affairs are not Orang Asli. Whereas in China there are many nationalities affairs commissions, these are mostly run by cadres who are minorities themselves, although in sensitive regions, government-trusted Han officials may hold the real power. Of course, China has more security concerns over certain minorities in certain regions, especially Xinjiang and Tibet.

To fully comprehend Tan's assertion in the context of the political economy of ethnic relations, it should be noted that the dominant group may perceive a subordinate group as "exotic" rather than "real" (Hoetink, 1973: 177-91). Another example of such an "exotic" minority in Malaysia, besides the Orang Asli (i.e. "aborigines") is the small *Gente Kristang* community (autoglossonym, from Portuguese "*Gente Cristã*") in the state of Melaka, descended from the 16th century Portuguese settlers and occupiers. Defined as "deviating in somatic and/or cultural respects, without being conceived subjectively as a

menace to the existing social order” (Hoetink, 1967), “exotic” groups (or Cox’s (1948) socioracial “strangers”) are not perceived as “real”, because they are not subjectively comprised within the “societal image” of the dominant. Thus they do not attract the latter’s hostility, as do “real” subordinate groups viewed as a menace. The case of the Ainu ア イヌ and the Burakumin 部落民 in Japan and that of the Amerindian natives and Afro-Americans in the United States today are good examples of these two polar subordinate situations – the Ainu and Amerindians being in some way viewed as “exotic” *vis-à-vis* the other two “real” minorities; instead of bitterness and hostility, they are met with “a mild benevolence, a condescending philanthropy” on the part of the dominant society (Hoetink, 1973: 179). Such distinction between the two types of subordinate groups was vividly described by DeVos in his study of the Burakumin: “The basic attitudes held [by the dominant Japanese society] toward the Ainu are not as pejorative as towards the outcasts [i.e. the Burakumin] [...] the Ainu have been treated ambivalently very much as the American Indians have been, in contrast to the caste distinctions which underlie the treatment of American blacks.” (DeVos, 1972: 326) Paradoxically, China’s largest minority, the Zhuang, could actually be more “exotic” than “real”. Being the most assimilated of minorities, the Zhuang’s ethnic consciousness was virtually created by the Han-dominated central Communist Party-State in the early 1950s (see, for instance, Kaup, 2000).

By the same token, appointment to leadership positions begs the question: exotic or real? Whether members of an ethnic minority are appointed to leadership positions could ultimately be perceived by the ethnic community concerned as irrelevant, as it does not reflect the extent of autonomy and self-determination which the community may regard as crucial for the preservation of communal interests – be they political, socioeconomic or cultural – or in short, who holds the real power? For instance, at the time of the riots, while the chairman of the Xinjiang Uyghur Zizhiqu is Nur Bekri, a Uyghur, in the eyes of the Uyghurs real power is allegedly in the hands of the Party secretary Wang Lequan 王乐泉, a Han.<sup>39</sup>

## 10. Class or Ethnicity? – The Rise of Peripheral Ethnonationalism

The well-being of freedom makes up for many wounds [...] If your pupils have fewer bruises, they are always hindered, always enchained, always sad.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762),

*Émile, ou De l'éducation*, Book II, Para. 209<sup>40</sup>

Rex (1986: xiii), in his remark that “what we call ‘race and ethnic relations situations’ is very often not the racial and ethnic factor as such but the injustice of elements in the class and status system”, emphasized the economic, political and social balance of power rather than biological or

cultural characteristics of groups. Differences in power and the dynamic change of power resources over time are seen as the key to explaining racial and ethnic conflicts. Such a perspective enables parallels to be drawn, for instance, between the “religious” conflict in Northern Ireland and racial violence in the British urban areas, which at first sight may not seem to share much similarity. As Stone (1985: 38) argued:

It is true that the sectarian gunman who enters a public house in Belfast and demands to know the religion of the drinkers before deciding who to murder has an identification problem not faced by the white racist intent on attacking blacks in the streets of Brixton or Bradford. However ... [both] incidents of violence take place against a background of differential group power, perpetuated over the years in customary patterns of social relations and institutions, and both are to some degree a legacy of colonialism.

Such a focus upon power differentials and the conceptual problem associated with “race” and “ethnicity”<sup>41</sup> have led to the argument that the notion of “minority” is central to the analysis of race and ethnic relations (see the earlier discussion on the concept of “minority” in Section 7). Nevertheless, it is useful to compare Rex’s remark with Cox’s thesis (1948) that perceives race relations as mainly proletarian-bourgeois, and hence political-class, relations. For Cox, racial prejudice is a weapon to exploit others rather than a defensive reflection of group solidarity. Racial categories exist in the social life of capitalist societies because they serve the interests of the ruling class; the contradictions in these economies have not yet reached the point at which the actual character of the underlying system is apparent to workers (Banton, 1983: 88). Such reductionist Marxist legacy of perceiving ethnic problem as class problem, coupled with the fact of the absolute demographic dominance of the Han Chinese dwarfing the minorities out of a critical mass, could be clouding the CCP regime from effective understanding of China’s ethnic problem, including that in the volatile ethnic regions of Xinjiang and Tibet. On the contrary, Wolpe, in his critique of reductionist Marxism which conceives classes as unitary entities, posited a different view:

[...] classes exist in forms which are fragmented and fractured in numerous ways, not only by the division of labour and, indeed, the concrete organisation of the entire system of production and distribution through which classes are necessarily formed, but by politics, culture, and ideology within that division of labour, for example, gender, religion, the mental-manual divide and racial differentiation. Classes, that is, are constituted, not as unified social forces, but as patchworks or segments which are differentiated and divided on a variety of bases and by varied processes [...] Race may, under determinate conditions, become interiorised in class struggles in both the sphere of the economy as well as the sphere of politics.

(Wolpe, 1988: 51-52)

Such a broadened understanding could serve to lead to a more balanced analytical framework on the trichotomy of polity, society and economy and in particular the political economy of State and ethnicity by taking into consideration both the two major dimensions of ethnopolitics – ethnic politics which includes both government responses to challenges from ethnic communities and the efforts of ethnic organizations seeking to influence State policy, and the politics of ethnicity which views ethnicity as a consequence of political action (Gheorghe, 1991), the latter “inverted paradigm” as we have observed earlier in Section 5 being exemplified by the waves of reethnicization in the Eastern European countries after the fall of the Communist Party totalitarianism and the phenomenon of ethnogenesis in Andalucía and among some highly Sinicized ethnic minorities of China such as the Zhuang and the Hui, as well as in the new-found ethnic intensity of the ethnoterritorial groups like the Uyghurs and Tibetans. Besides, in this regard, it is also instructive to compare Cox’s thesis with the theories developed by Bonacich (1972) and Kuper (1974). Bonacich’s “split labour market theory” is essentially a theory of ethnic relations which emphasizes the material bases of ethnic antagonism. It refers to labour markets which are divided along ethnic lines, so that higher-paid groups of workers are distinguished from cheaper labour by their ethnic characteristics. Although Bonacich described it as a “class” theory of race and ethnicity (Bonacich, 1979: 17) and located the origin of ethnic antagonism within the development of capitalism, her theory differs significantly from Cox’s approach in that it attributes ethnic antagonism to the competition which arises from a differential price for labour, rather than to the strategy of the ruling class to keep two sections of the working class separate.

In his study of the revolutions in several African countries, Kuper (1974) found that, despite the existence of class differences, once revolutions started they developed along ethnic rather than class lines. Although class conflict is the source of revolutionary change in many societies, Kuper observed that in plural societies “it is the political relations which appreciably determine the relationship to the means of production, rather than the reverse, and the catalyst of revolutionary change is to be found in the structure of power, rather than in economic changes which exhaust the possibilities of a particular mode of production” (Kuper, 1974: 226). While Cox attributed the main forms of alignment and conflict, including ethnic ones, to the relation of groups (classes) to the means of production, political relations in plural societies, according to Kuper, influence relations to the means of production more than any influence in the reverse direction. Thus, conflicts developed in plural societies tend to follow the lines of ethnic cleavage more closely than class division. Such trend of development is apparent in the Eastern European countries after the collapse of Communist Party totalitarianism including the strife-torn Balkans as well as the increasingly the volatile ethnic



regions of China exemplified by the troubled Xinjiang and Tibet, and the potential impact on the long-simmering peripheral ethnonationalism in Inner Mongolia from the recent rise of increasingly anti-Han-Chinese ethnocentrism of the neo-Nazis in the Republic of Mongolia<sup>42</sup>, that first country in Asia to come under Communist Party dictatorship and also first country in Asia to release herself from that yoke. A relatively high-profile case related to peripheral ethnonationalism in Inner Mongolia, as highlighted by the Amnesty International, is that of Hada who was tried behind closed doors in the Inner Mongolia Zizhiqu in 1996 and sentenced to 15 years in jail for separatism and spying and his support for the Southern Mongolian Democratic Alliance that sought greater rights for China's ethnic Mongolians.

### 11. Uttering the “F” Word: Is Federalism the Solution?

The term “federation” was in fact never officially used in China or Spain or Indonesia – countries in search of a solution to ethnoregional problems. Such notwithstanding, post-Franco Spain has in reality evolved into an incipient federation, while in China, just like in Indonesia, the term “federal” is still very much a taboo, although the existence of the Chinese *de facto* fiscal federalism is irrefutable. In a sense, post-1981 Spain has outgrown the fear of both fiscal and political decentralization along federal lines being a prelude to territorial disintegration, but China and Indonesia have not. Nevertheless, the idea for the reorganization of a post-CCP China along federal lines has resurfaced amidst the anguish, agony and bitter frustration among the exiled Chinese intelligentsia in the aftermath of the 1989 tragedy, in combination with the continuing cross-Strait tension, the “Handover” of Hong Kong and Macau to China respectively in 1997 and 1999, and the recurrent Tibet crises. Suggestions vary in arrangement details, including a prominent confederation proposal by exiled dissident and federalist Yan Jiaqi 嚴家其 (1992)<sup>43</sup> encompassing the “loose republics” of Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, Tibet, Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang (in an arrangement like that of the European Union) and “close republics” consisting of the rest of present-day China (in an arrangement akin to the US's). Yan obviously had in mind some sort of coexistence of federal and confederal systems within a single country – two systems such as those explained by Dorff (1994: 100): “[...] in a true federation, the central government can make decisions directly affecting individuals in the regional units without the formal compliance of the regional governments; in a confederation, the central government has authority over the regional governments, not over individuals, and hence must rely on the cooperation and support of the regions in order to exercise authority.”

Political federalization has come under the limelight again in the case of China with the arrest and jailing of prominent dissident writer Liu Xiaobo 刘

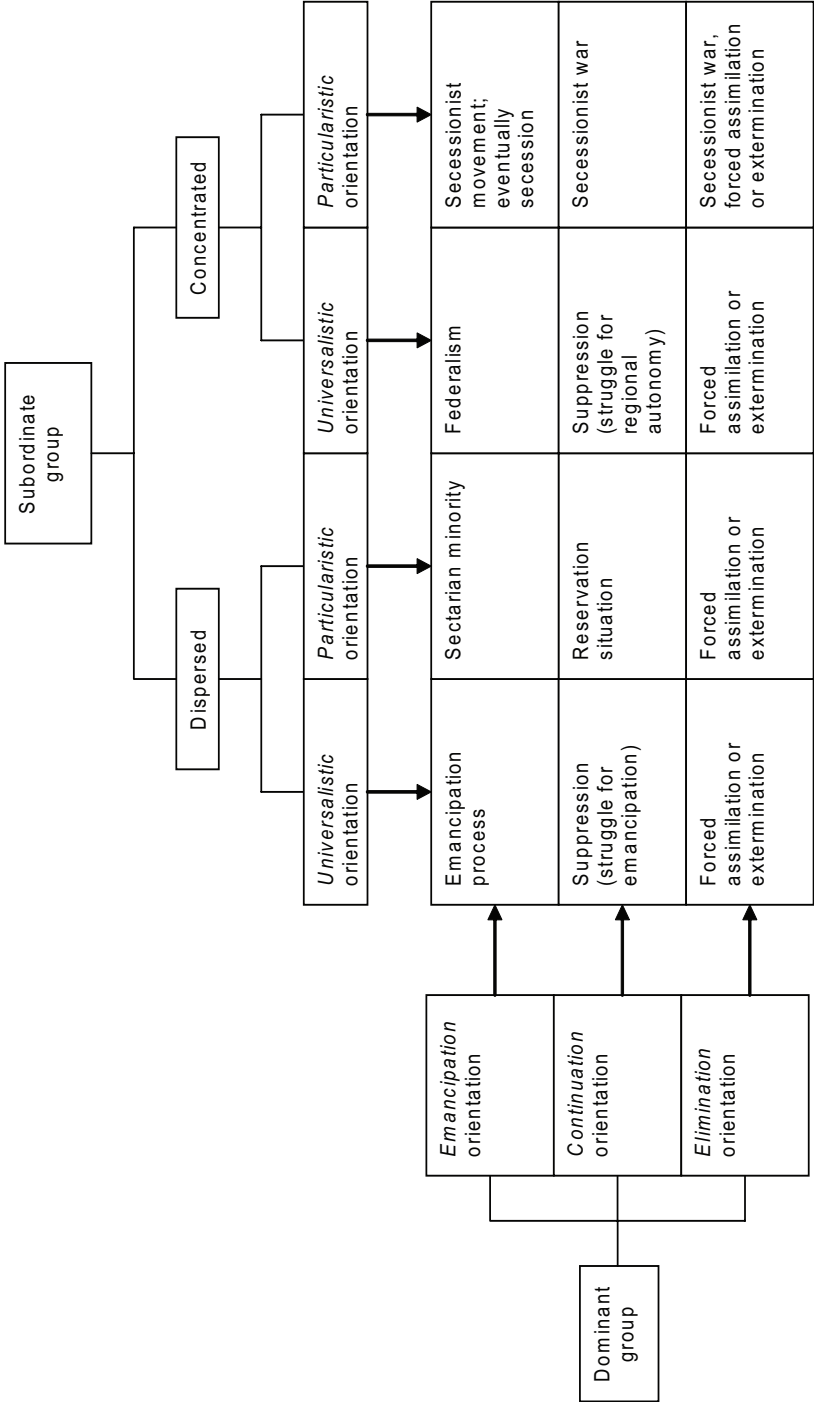
晓波 for organizing the signing of “Charter 08” (*Ling-ba Xianzhang* 零八宪章)<sup>44</sup> that included an Item 18 “A Federated Republic” among its recommendations on national governance, citizens’ rights and social development:

A Federated Republic. A democratic China should seek to act as a responsible major power contributing toward peace and development in the Asian Pacific region by approaching others in a spirit of equality and fairness. In Hong Kong and Macao, we should support the freedoms that already exist. With respect to Taiwan, we should declare our commitment to the principles of freedom and democracy and then, negotiating as equals, and ready to compromise, seek a formula for peaceful unification. We should approach disputes in the national-minority areas of China with an open mind, seeking ways to find a workable framework within which all ethnic and religious groups can flourish. We should aim ultimately at a federation of democratic communities of China.<sup>45</sup>

While a nascent federalist structure has already been observed to be emerging in China as a result of rapid economic and fiscal decentralization, there could be inherent dangers to bring decentralization beyond the fiscal into the political along federal lines. Acute interregional economic inequalities could be viewed as incompatible with the very concept of federalism, and it is hence debatable as to whether federalization should come before or after sufficient interregional equalization in countries with high levels of interregional disparities such as contemporary China, taking into consideration the possibility of centrifugal forces triggered by interregional equalization efforts such as the tax revolts in modern federations like Belgium or would-be federations like Italy (*ibid.*: 274).

Though focusing on dyadic (or bicomunal) federations and confederations, Duchacek (1988: 15-18) identified four prerequisites for the possibility of federalism or confederalism as a cooperative framework which, for the present context, could also be considered applicable to non-dyadic cases: 1) territorial diffusion of power; 2) pluralistic democracy; 3) commitment to establish or maintain a composite nation; and 4) compound majoritarianism, all of which are not clearly evident in the case of contemporary China, especially in view of the recent ethnoregional disturbances. A line of thought similar to Duchacek’s is reflected in van Amersfoort’s (1978) typology of “majority-minority” relations via a combination of the orientations of dispersed and concentrated subordinate groups with three dimensions of dominant group aspirations. Using the terms “dominant” (or “superordinate”) and “subordinate” that convey more accurately the power dimension, instead of van Amersfoort’s “majority” and “minority” which can be semantically confusing when size and power do not coincide, Figure 19 illustrates a number of probable outcomes produced

Figure 19 Van Amersfoort's Typology of Dominant-Subordinate Relations



by this configuration. Ethnic consciousness and ethnic intensity, which are associated with the homeland/immigrant dichotomy and territorial policies in countries with considerable degree of sectionalism, play a crucial role in determining public policy in a multiethnic society. From this perspective, the goals of the dominant and subordinate groups are of particularly great importance. Figure 19 clearly demonstrates that a stable relationship between the dominants and subordinates free of conflict is an exception rather than a rule, since only two out of a total of twelve cells formed by the interface of dominant-subordinate orientations – those marked “emancipation process” and “federalism” – suggest the prospect of a stable form of participation in society by subordinate groups. Federalism, as a “process and institutional framework for territorial management of power and resources [...] appropriate for those communities that occupy geographically delineated areas and are both willing and able to preserve and exercise self-government within these areas” (Duchacek, 1988: 16), is thus far from a prevalent phenomenon even in the world context.

While democratization and the federalization process (the latter refers to the *Comunidades Autónomas* project, as the term “federal” is not officially used) of the Spanish polity after the death of Franco have been looked upon by many countries with ethnoterritorial problems undergoing political transition as a model to emulate, van Amersfoort’s model suggests that a federal solution may be an exception rather than a rule among nations given the different objective realities facing different countries.<sup>46</sup> For instance, in China, unlike in Spain, the lack of a stable democratic political institution and the existence of economic deprivation can render intergroup compromise difficult or impossible. In short, variations in one or more of these socio-politico-economic parameters can result in a drastically different form of State response to the objective exigencies presented by a country’s ethnic fractionalization and of societal reaction to State intervention.

While the present taboo against a federal arrangement with high regional autonomy<sup>47</sup> has had deep roots from earlier times<sup>48</sup>, it is currently being further enhanced by CCP’s fear of losing its monopoly of political power as federalization would inevitably tend to go hand in hand with democratization. Adding to that is the enigma of Taiwan<sup>49</sup> and the problem of Tibet with their perceived links with foreign, especially American and Indian, interests. With the disintegration of the Soviet Union<sup>50</sup> always hanging like the sword of Damocles to remind the present leaders and people of China of the peril of democratization and regional autonomy, and the fact that federalization or reaffirmation of federalism in whether Russia, the East European countries or post-Franco Spain both followed the disgraceful dethronement of dictatorial, authoritarian or totalitarian regimes, the present Chinese ruling regime’s reservation against such federalization by devolution is plainly understandable.

After all, the eventual disintegration of the Russian empire (the “prison of nations”, or in its modern form, the former Soviet Union) in December 1991 has left China to be the world’s lone surviving former empire still remaining intact, having escaped that ignominious fate of dissolution that befell, besides the Russian empire, all in the 20th century, the Ottoman, Austro-Hungarian and the Western maritime empires (*ibid.*: 276-277). Incidentally, one ethnic region did escape from China, namely Outer Mongolia that formed the independent Mongolian People’s Republic in 1924, with Russian support, though not recognized by China until 1946. Also, as we have seen earlier, the Uyghurs in fact established, with Russian help, a short-lived East Turkestan Republic in 1944, but it collapsed after the 1949 Communist victory in China’s civil war, and the region was reincorporated into China as the Xinjiang Uygur Zizhiqu in 1955. Besides these, the island province of Taiwan has been *de facto* independent since 1949, regardless of the fact that it is not diplomatically so recognized by most countries of the world for *Realpolitik* reasons and that the government of the island state continues to technically consider itself the legitimate “Republic of China” government-in-exile with jurisdiction over all China.<sup>51</sup> Finally, adding to the federal taboo is the tendency to recycle the “black hand” (*heishou* 黑手) theory – the “shopworn conspiracy theories that blame mass protests primarily on the CCP’s foreign and domestic enemies, reflecting the classic Leninist insistence that social protest in a Communist country cannot just happen, it must be instigated” (Tanner, 2004: 143) – which seems apparent in the State’s response to the 2009 Xinjiang crisis or the 2008 Tibet riots. Similar State response can be observed following the July Fifth Xinjiang riots when Nur Bekri, chairman of the Xinjiang Uygur Zizhiqu, declared on 18th July 2009 the source of the riots being “the triumvirate of terrorist, secessionist and extremist forces”<sup>52</sup> and Wu Shimin 吴仕民, vice-chairman of China’s State Ethnic Affairs Commission, stated on 21st July 2009 that the July Fifth riots had absolutely nothing to do with China’s nationality (ethnic minority) policies. “In a world that is obsessed with vertical accountability we easily judge and label situations that appear to be in a crisis as dysfunctional, to be in a state of failure [...],” Reeler (2007: 15) noted, “Whilst this might be true in some situations [...] developmental crises [...] unconsciously and quite naturally evolve, often as a social system grows beyond the relationships and capacities that hold it together.” Not all crises are failures, Reeler further observed:

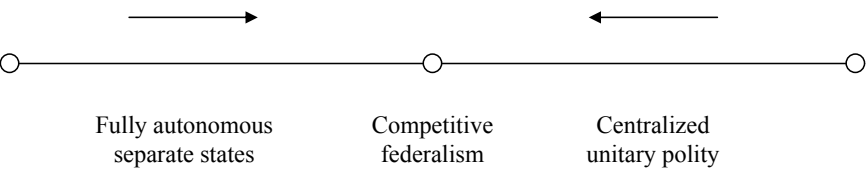
Take a pioneering organisation that grows in size and complexity beyond the ability of the pioneers to lead and manage [...] The unavoidable and typical crisis of the pioneering organisation often manifests in a breakdown of relationships, of leadership legitimacy, of commitment, and signals the need and the opportunity to rethink its nature, its identity, structure or power

relationships, its functioning and culture, which, once done, can give way to a new lease on life, a new phase of growth and development. Transformation requires and is borne out of the ripening and surfacing of crisis. (ibid.: 16)

This means, in other words, facing up to domestic realities and pondering the possibility of transformative change (see Figure 4 and Figure 21 in the special issue’s prologue on China’s social transformation), without which any solution to the root problems leading to either the 1989 tragedy or the recent Xinjiang and Lhasa riots would remain illusive.<sup>53</sup>

Buchanan (1995: 23), writing on the path dependency of constitutional reform towards competitive federalism (Figure 20), remarked that any reform, constitutional or otherwise, “commences from some ‘here and now,’ some status quo that is the existential reality. History matters, and the historical experience of a political community is beyond any prospect of change; the constitutional-institutional record can neither be ignored nor rewritten [...]” If the “here” is a centralized and unitary political authority, constitutional reform must embody devolution – a shift of genuine political power from the centre to the separate constituent political units.

Figure 20 Competitive Federalism: Constitutional Reform Schemata



Source: Buchanan (1995: 24), Figure 1.

One of the basic features of a federal system, according to Bakvis and Chandler (1987: 4), is that it provides “incentives for structuring group/class conflicts along territorial lines”. When the territories concerned represent the centres of concentration of distinctive socioracial communities, ethnic conflicts are translated into territorial rivalries and the process of fiscal federalization becomes an arena of ethnic resource competition. Evaluating the role of asymmetrical federalism<sup>54</sup> in explaining India’s ability to “hold together”, Tillin (2006: 62) noted that linguistic reorganization of the Indian states “involved the accommodation of linguistic differences, but not on a basis that allowed differential protection to any regional language, and not on a basis that formed otherwise coherent ‘ethnic’ or ‘cultural’ federal sub-units.” Notably, Manor (1996) argued that “ethnic” identities in India tend to be crosscutting rather than compounding but once states were reorganized

along linguistic lines, their inhabitants discovered all the things that divided them<sup>55</sup>, which in our present context could be leading down the ominous path to the state of *bellum omnium contra omnes*, vindicating Thomas Hobbes's portentous judgement in his 1651 treatise *Leviathan*, "The condition of man [...] is a condition of war of everyone against everyone." This "state of nature" – the war of all against all, Hobbes argued in *Leviathan*, could only be averted by a strong central government. Such, just as for India, as we have observed so far, could also have the same resonance for the case of the other Asian giant, China.

Nevertheless, Dorff (1994), exploring the role played by federalism in the fragmentation of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, warned that federal *structures*, when not accompanied by federal *process*, could have contributed to the fragmentation of these countries. According to Dorff, the argument that federalism in USSR, Yugoslavia or Czechoslovakia ameliorated ethnic conflict "seriously understates the role of the center and the peculiar control mechanism offered by the centralized, hierarchical Communist party organization". Citing Verdery (1993) and Roeder (1991), Dorff pointed out that these one-party states' federalist structures, without federalist processes, initially used to suppress, not accommodate, ethnic differences, had actually helped to create a political environment ripe for disintegration via ethnic mobilization once decentralization began, as regional leaderships bent on protecting the interests of their territorial constituencies at the expense of other regions and the federation:

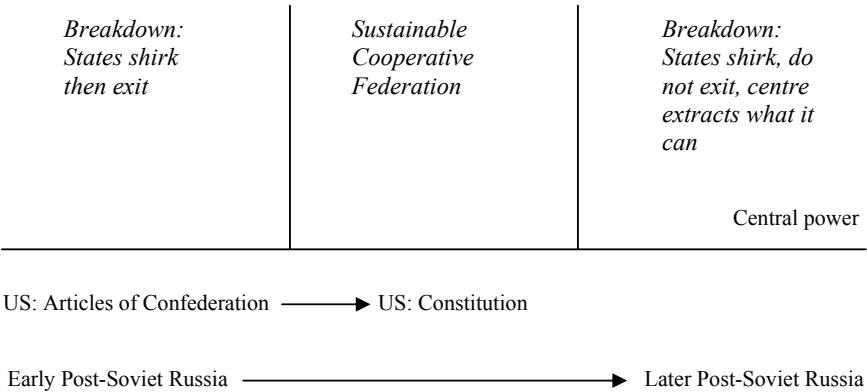
Strong central authority and a hierarchical Communist party structure militated against accommodative and cooperative processes. When the power of the center began to weaken, the political system shifted not toward a decentralized politics of accommodation but to a politics of cutthroat competition between the center and the periphery and among the units of the periphery.

(Dorff, 1994: 104)

Hence, the danger of fragmentation coming from democratization and federalization is real but not inevitable, as shown by the two examples illustrated in Figure 21.

In this regard, it could be highly equivocal to keep seeing the disintegration of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Soviet Union as a sword of Damocles warning against federal structures. On the contrary, the fate of these disintegrated nations could be a lesson to take heed of at this juncture just passing the 20th anniversary of the 1989 tragedy, in particular after the foreboding events of last two years' massive, deadly ethnoregional riots, to begin early the federal process. Definitely, a federal process is always full of pitfalls, especially for a country still facing the problems of high

Figure 21 Federal Sustainability



Source: de Figueiredo, McFaul and Weingast (2007: 175), Figure 3.

incidence of poverty, ethnoterritoriality, sectionalism and ethnoregional socioeconomic disparities. Inevitably, it is also a process abounding with right and wrong options and choices. Again, consider the case of Spain whose regional structure bears substantial similarity to the Chinese – for instance, only three out of Spain’s seventeen *Comunidades Autónomas*, comprising less than 30 per cent of the country’s population, are non-Castilian ethnic regions, in contrast to countries like Belgium or the former Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia where the state is composed of constituent regions each of which populated predominantly with a differentiated ethnic community. As up to 1.5 million people walked the Gran Via, Diagonal and Passeig de Gràcia (Paseo de Gracia) boulevards in Barcelona on the eve of Spain winning in the 2010 World Cup final demanding greater autonomy and claiming nationhood for Catalunya (Cataluña), bringing again to the fore Spain’s dilemma in pondering her options whether to move on from the State of the Autonomies to a full-fledged federation – through a whole spectrum of scenarios as summarized by Brassloff (1989: 41-45) into the evolutionist minimalist regional autonomist, radically revisionist neo-centralist, radically European regionalist, nationalist particularist, mixed federo-regional and, lastly, the federalist maximalist in which the presently evolving State of the Autonomies may develop all its potential and end up operating as a federal state – it could also be timely for an Asian giant in astounding transformation to ponder new options other than a *dictablanda*<sup>56</sup> or even a *democradura* with the perpetually uneasy coexistence of economic decentralization with political centralism or, as a former vice-premier pointed out, being constantly trapped in the perennial “cycles of decentralization and recentralization”<sup>57</sup> that breed unending chaos and instability.



## 12. Conclusion

This paper has examined China's ethnoregional disparity, ethnoterritoriality and peripheral nationalism as well as decentralization and the related, controversial issue of federalism by scrutinizing various crucial aspects including the political, economic, sociological and historical. More specific elements like the country's seemingly paradoxical *de facto* fiscal federalism amidst political unitarism, ethnoterritoriality, poverty, interregional disparity, threat of centrifugal forces, ethnogenesis, reethnicization, and the fear of balkanization or spectre of "China deconstructs" have received particular attention. To summarize and conclude, as Tillin (2006: 45) noted:

There is considerable disagreement about the role of federalism in countries containing more than one territorially concentrated ethnic group or nation. The collapse of the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia led to renewed questioning of the desirability of federal systems in heterogeneous countries, even though their democratic shortcomings limited the federal character of their polities.

Similarly, Snyder (2000: 40) advised that "[w]herever possible, democratizing states should try to promote civic identities and guarantee rights at the individual level. For the same reasons, ethnically based federalism and regional autonomy should be avoided, since they create political organizations and media markets that are centred on ethnic differences." Particularly notable for our present context is, as Bunce (2004) observed, that the way federal or quasi-federal systems were organized along the ethnic territorial boundaries in the Communist Party-ruled authoritarian countries contained the building blocks for later ethno-nationalist movements, making federalism undesirable in multiethnic, democratizing countries due to its potential for institutionalizing and politicizing ethnic differences. Yet, citing Stepan (1999: 20) and Bermeo (2004: 475-477), Tillin (2006: 46) argued that "it has been shown empirically both that long-standing multinational democracies tend to have federal systems and that federal systems of government have been better than unitary systems at eliminating violent conflict".

Nevertheless, for Chinese leaders, the Russian experience, as Konitzer and Wegren (2006: 503) succinctly related below, may provide a warning:

Among the political legacies bequeathed to Vladimir Putin were a decentralized political system and a nascent federalist structure that successfully avoided the disintegration of the Russian Federation following the breakup of the Soviet Union [...] However, some analysts argue that Yeltsin's famous 1990 edict to Tatarstan and Bashkortostan to "take as much sovereignty as you can swallow," and the "parade of sovereignties" that followed, meant that Russia's decentralization went too far and threatened

Russia's federal integrity [...] Since Yeltsin left the political scene at the end of 1999, a major turning point in Russia's political development has been political recentralization, with some analysts charging that Putin is trying to establish a "unitary state" by "aggressively pursuing an anti-federal policy" [...]

Such fear might not be unfounded. Recalling Stepan's (1999) observation that no successful federal unions were created by independent states since the 19th century, and that by Lake and Rothchild (2005) that most recent attempts of territorial decentralization also failed or were viewed as mere transitional arrangements, Roust and Shvetsova (2007: 244-245) noted:

The problem is that federal arrangements are inherently unstable [...] In order to succeed, federal constitutions (and schemes of political decentralization in general) require special safeguards to counter their tendency to move toward either extreme decentralization or overcentralization [...] As it is difficult to implement credible safeguards, prospective member states cannot trust each other and thus seek to avoid the federal form and the risks associated with federal instability [...] federal stability (robustness) requires for itself a well-functioning democratic process, which satisfies a fairly restrictive condition. The requirement to the democratic process is, of course, only a necessary, not a sufficient condition for the federal success. Yet [...] only the states with well-developed (properly institutionalized) democratic electoral competition have a chance to form a resilient federal union and sustain their federal constitutional arrangements not just in form, but in their political practice as well.

Finally, on a brighter note, while admitting that the process of the institutionalization of authoritarian rule in China since reform began has generated limited momentum towards a more open political system, Pei opined that

Though little has been achieved thus far in the way of actual democratization, the institutional foundations for genuine democracy are slowly taking shape. The maturation of the rule of law, the NPC, and village self-government are important components of this evolutionary process [...] While centralized bureaucratic empires are extremely vulnerable to centrifugal forces and tend to collapse when the political authority of the center drastically declines, a federalized system with a well-defined division of political authority can create numerous political safety valves to reduce the stress on the center and limit its political liability. In China, genuine political decentralization founded upon an emerging economic federalist structure augurs well for future *regional* democratic breakthroughs.

(Pei, 1995: 77)

It need not be reiterated that China is a highly decentralized country, at least economically or fiscally, and there will be continuing debate on the future need for and the direction of decentralization – in its various manifestations: political, fiscal, administrative – and the concomitant prospects for federalism, again in its various manifestations, which could be as sensitive and subversive in China as in Indonesia, would keep returning to haunt a colossal country in breathtaking transformation. To move beyond the present *de facto* fiscal federalism, any plan for federalization should no doubt be conducted with caution, and the very necessity, feasibility and all attendant hazards have to be considered in real earnest, as Saunders (1995: 78) noted:

Federalist elements are closely linked with other aspects of the system of government. They are likely to work differently, although not necessarily unsatisfactorily, when separated from them, or even from the historical, political, and economic setting in which they developed.

Yet, as Duchacek asked in the abstract of his 1988 article on bicomunal polities where permanent asymmetry makes a simple majoritarian formula for decision-making processes unacceptable: “What other decisional frameworks have a greater chance for success: federalism, federalism with a heavy dose of confederal ingredients, regional confederation, consociationalism or secession?” A confederal modification of federalism has so far appeared to be the answer, according to Duchacek (1988: 31):

Despite its obvious deficiencies, the confederal-consociational modification of federalism is more acceptable to two asymmetric and antagonistic communities than a concept of a federal overarching cultural political union with its promise of majoritarian decisionmaking. Despite a constant threat of veto and thus potential immobilism, both basic and current issues have to be negotiated and renegotiated time and again.

Though China is not dyadic in terms of ethnic composition, her ethnic Han absolute dominance in demographic make-up *vis-à-vis* her ethnic minorities does give her a certain similarity to a dyadic case. Moving forward along a more comprehensive federalist line may or may not be the only feasible or necessary or even correct step from her present stage of fiscal decentralization, but such doubt and reservation could inevitably be tempered by Duchacek’s (*ibid.*) disarming and familiar query in his observation on the prevalent reserved reaction to the confederal nonmajoritarian formula and its piecemeal and irritatingly slow implementation by compromise and consensus: “If not that, what else?”

## Appendix

### Ethnic Fractionalization of 240 Countries/Regions

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Country/Region</i>	<i>EFI</i>
1	Congo, Democratic Rep. of the (formerly Zaire)	0.885
2	Uganda, Republic of	0.883
3	Kenya, Republic of	0.877
4	India, Republic of	0.876
5	South Africa, Republic of	0.873
6	Cameroon, Republic of	0.852
7	Mali, Republic of	0.844
8	Philippines, Republic of the	0.838
9.5	Nigeria, Federal Republic of	0.827
9.5	Tanzania, United Republic of	0.827
11	Cote d'Ivoire/Ivory Coast, Republic of	0.826
12	Lebanon, Republic of	0.821
13	Mauritius	0.814
14	Zambia, Republic of	0.813
15	Chad, Republic of	0.810
16.5	Guinea-Bissau, Republic of	0.806
16.5	Papua New Guinea, Independent State of	0.806
18	Yugoslavia, Socialist Fed. Rep. of (pre-Jan 1992)	0.795
19	Suriname, Republic of	0.789
20	Senegal, Republic of	0.788
21	Madagascar, Democratic Republic of	0.776
22.5	Sierra Leone, Republic of	0.771
22.5	Angola, People's Republic of	0.771
24	Gabonese Republic	0.765
25	Gambia, Republic of The	0.764
26	Central African Republic	0.757
27	Ethiopia (pre-May 1993)	0.756
28	Indonesia, Republic of	0.754
29	Qatar, State of	0.746
30	Liberia, Republic of	0.745
31	Guinea, Republic of	0.742
32	Ghana, Republic of	0.741
33	Afganistan, Republic of	0.739
34	Bolivia, Republic of	0.735
35	Burkina Faso	0.734
36	Mozambique, Republic of	0.727
37	Cayman Islands (UK)	0.720
38	Ethiopia (post-May 1993)	0.717
39	Sudan, Republic of the	0.715
40	Canada	0.714
41	Belize	0.711
42	Guam (US)	0.705
43	Eritrea	0.699
44	Malawi, Republic of	0.691
45	Togo, Republic of	0.689
46	Virgin Islands (US)	0.688
47	Congo, Republic of the	0.685

## Appendix (continued)

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Country/Region</i>	<i>EFI</i>
48.5	Monaco, Principality of	0.684
<b>48.5</b>	<b>Malaysia</b>	<b>0.684</b>
50	Kazakhstan, Republic of	0.679
51.5	Kuwait, State of	0.675
51.5	Bosnia and Herzegovina	0.675
53.5	New Caledonia (Fr.)	0.671
53.5	Niger, Republic of	0.671
55	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (former)	0.670
56	East Timor	0.667
57	Laos/Lao People's Democratic Republic	0.665
58	Kyrgyzstan, Republic of	0.664
59	Namibia, Republic of	0.663
60	Iran, Islamic Republic of	0.661
61.5	Mauritania, Islamic Republic of	0.660
61.5	Benin, Republic of	0.660
63	French Polynesia (Fr.)	0.656
64.5	Micronesia, Federated States of	0.655
64.5	United Arab Emirates	0.655
66	Andorra, Principality of	0.651
67	Pakistan, Islamic Republic of	0.648
68	Guatemala, Republic of	0.645
69	Morocco, Kingdom of	0.643
70	Peru, Republic of	0.637
71	Trinidad and Tobago, Republic of	0.635
72	Nepal, Kingdom of	0.634
73	Guyana, Co-operative Republic of	0.628
74	Ecuador, Republic of	0.615
75	Latvia, Republic of	0.612
76	Colombia, Republic of	0.601
77	Cuba, Republic of	0.591
78	Djibouti, Republic of	0.585
79.5	Tajikistan, Republic of	0.583
79.5	Nauru, Republic of	0.583
81	Fiji, Republic of	0.580
<b>82</b>	<b>Belgium, Kingdom of</b>	<b>0.574</b>
83	Macedonia, Republic of	0.573
84	Bahrain, State of	0.566
85	Yugoslavia, Federal Rep. of (post-Jan 1992)	0.561
86	Hawai'i (US)	0.560
87	Bhutan, Kingdom of	0.555
88	Christmas Island (Australia)	0.552
89	Cape Verde, Republic of	0.551
90	Liechtenstein, Principality of	0.550
91	Brazil, Federative Republic of	0.549
92	Moldova, Republic of	0.546
93	Georgia, Republic of	0.545
94	Mexico/United Mexican States	0.542
95	Thailand, Kingdom of	0.535

**Appendix (continued)**

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Country/Region</i>	<i>EFI</i>
96	Switzerland/Swiss Confederation	0.531
97	Estonia, Republic of	0.528
98	French Guiana (Fr.)	0.526
99	Brunei Darussalam, State of	0.525
100	Zimbabwe, Republic of	0.522
101	Burma, Union of	0.520
102	Gibraltar (UK)	0.517
103	Yemen, Republic of (post-May 1990)	0.507
104	Iraq, Republic of	0.502
105	Tonga, Kingdom of	0.500
106.5	Man, Isle of (UK)	0.498
106.5	Chile, Republic of	0.498
108	Venezuela, Republic of	0.497
109	Yemen Arab Republic (pre-May 1990)	0.495
110	Turks and Caicos Islands (UK)	0.493
111	Cocos Islands (Australia)	0.487
112.5	Nicaragua, Republic of	0.484
112.5	Uzbekistan, Republic of	0.484
114	Jordan, Hashemite Kingdom of	0.481
115	Palau Islands (US)	0.480
116	Singapore, Republic of	0.479
117	Panama, Republic of	0.477
118	Bermuda (UK)	0.476
119	Svalbard (Norway)	0.468
120	Czechoslovakia (former)	0.464
121	Albania, Republic of	0.460
122	Turkmenistan	0.455
123	Luxembourg, Grand Duchy of	0.452
124.5	Northern Mariana Islands (US)	0.444
124.5	Norfolk Island (Australia)	0.444
<b>126</b>	<b>Spain</b>	<b>0.436</b>
127.5	Dominican Republic	0.429
127.5	Sri Lanka, Democratic Socialist Republic of	0.429
129	Sao Tome and Principe, Democratic Republic of	0.420
130	Botswana, Republic of	0.418
131.5	Ukraine	0.417
131.5	Syrian Arab Republic	0.417
133	Oman, Sultanate of	0.406
134	Puerto Rico (US)	0.405
135	Northern Ireland (UK)	0.403
137	United States of America	0.395
137	Equatorial Guinea, Republic of	0.395
137	Jamaica	0.395
139	Algeria, Democratic and Popular Republic of	0.375
140	Belarus, Republic of	0.373
141	Croatia	0.371
142	Cyprus	0.358
143	Lithuania, Republic of	0.345

## Appendix (continued)

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Country/Region</i>	<i>EFI</i>
144	Western Sahara	0.343
145	West Bank (of the Jordan River)	0.339
146	Barbados	0.333
147	Turkey, Republic of	0.330
148	Cook Islands (NZ)	0.327
149	United Kingdom of Great Britain & N. Ireland	0.325
150	Aruba (Neth.)	0.320
151	Russian Federation	0.311
152.5	Grenada	0.308
152.5	Azerbaijan, Republic of	0.308
154	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	0.306
155	Israel, State of	0.303
156	Bangladesh, People's Republic of	0.285
157	Rwanda, Republic of	0.275
158	San Marino, Most Serene Republic of	0.272
159.5	Quebec (Canada)	0.270
159.5	Egypt, Arab Republic of	0.270
161	American Samoa (US)	0.269
162	Bulgaria, Republic of	0.264
163	Viet Nam, Socialist Republic of	0.262
164	Burundi, Republic of	0.258
165	Somalia	0.256
168	Bahamas, The Commonwealth of the	0.255
168	Saudi Arabia, Kingdom of	0.255
168	Argentina/Argentine Republic	0.255
168	Netherlands Antilles (Neth.)	0.255
168	Saint Helena (UK)	0.255
171	Slovakia	0.254
172	Lesotho, Kingdom of	0.253
173.5	Greenland/Kalaallit Nunaat	0.241
173.5	Comoros, Federal Islamic Republic of the	0.241
175	Cambodia, State of	0.238
176	Costa Rica, Republic of	0.237
177	France/French Republic	0.235
178	Uruguay, Oriental Republic of	0.218
179	New Zealand	0.217
180.5	Romania	0.202
180.5	El Salvador, Republic of	0.202
182.5	Italy/Italian Republic	0.196
182.5	Niue (NZ)	0.196
184	Mongolia	0.187
185	Swaziland, Kingdom of	0.186
187.5	Saint Lucia	0.185
187.5	Guadeloupe (Fr.)	0.185
187.5	Martinique (Fr.)	0.185
187.5	Honduras, Republic of	0.185
190	British Virgin Islands (UK)	0.180
191	Slovenia	0.170

**Appendix (continued)**

<i>Rank</i>	<i>Country/Region</i>	<i>EFI</i>
192	Hungary, Republic of	0.168
193	Sweden, Kingdom of	0.164
194	Antigua and Barbuda	0.150
195	Western Samoa, Independent State of	0.138
196.5	Germany, Federal Republic of (pre-Oct 1990)	0.134
196.5	Germany, Federal Republic of (post-Oct 1990)	0.134
199	Yemen, People's Democratic Republic of (former)	0.133
199	Solomon Islands	0.133
199	Reunion (Fr.)	0.133
201	Armenia, Republic of	0.128
<b>202</b>	<b>China, People's Republic of</b>	<b>0.125</b>
203	Finland, Republic of	0.122
204	Libya/Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahi.	0.117
205.5	Seychelles	0.115
205.5	Saint Kitts and Nevis, Federation of	0.115
207.5	Czech Republic	0.114
207.5	Vanuatu, Republic of	0.114
209	Ireland, Republic of	0.113
210	Cyprus (Greek sector)	0.097
212.5	Macao (China)	0.096
212.5	Malta	0.096
212.5	Paraguay, Republic of	0.096
212.5	Australia, Commonwealth of	0.096
215	Haiti, Republic of	0.095
216	Japan	0.079
218.5	Montserrat (UK)	0.077
218.5	Iceland, Republic of	0.077
218.5	Netherlands, Kingdom of the	0.077
218.5	Tuvalu	0.077
221	Greece/Hellenic Republic	0.068
222.5	Denmark, Kingdom of	0.059
222.5	Dominica	0.059
224.5	Marshall Islands, Republic of the	0.058
224.5	Norway, Kingdom of	0.058
226	Poland, Republic of	0.047
227	Cyprus (Turkish sector)	0.045
230	Tunisia, Republic of	0.039
230	Kiribati	0.039
230	Taiwan (Republic of China)	0.039
230	Hong Kong (China)	0.039
230	Falkland Islands (UK)	0.039
234.5	Gaza Strip	0.020
234.5	Saint Pierre and Miquelon (Fr.)	0.020
234.5	Mayotte (Fr.)	0.020
234.5	German Democratic Republic (former)	0.020
237	Portugal, Republic of	0.019
238	Austria, Republic of	0.012
239	Korea, Democratic People's Republic of	0.004
240	Korea, Republic of	0.002



## Notes

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1. As Lijphart (1977: 56) remarked, "The notion of a multiple balance of power contains two separate elements: (1) a balance, or an approximate equilibrium, among the segments, and (2) the presence of at least three different segments." However, cooperation among groups becomes more difficult, as the number participating in negotiations increases beyond three or four. On the other hand, a moderately multiple configuration is preferable to a dual segmentation as the latter entails a constant tension between "a [majority] hegemony or a precarious balance [and it leads] easily to an interpretation of politics as a zero-sum game" (*ibid.*). Bi-ethnic states are thus a special, problematic type of multiethnic state. In a bi-ethnic state, a gain for one ethnic group is easily perceived as a loss for the other. By contrast, in societies with more than two major ethnic groups it may not be apparent who loses when one ethnic group improves its position. This can lead to a logrolling situation, in which each group cares primarily about its own gains and nobody is conscious of the possible costs of a policy decision. The scenario is outlined in Steiner's study on consociationalism in Switzerland (Steiner, 1974). It also implies that ethnic tension could be more easily aroused by preferential policies in bi-ethnic states than in those with more than two ethnic groups.
  2. According to the "critical mass" theory – advanced, among others, by Semyonov and Tyree (1981) – societies are considered multiethnic only if minorities constitute more than ten per cent of their population.
  3. Affirmative action and preferential treatment are "race-conscious" and "group-centred" strategies in contexts where the dominant policy form, particularly in liberal democracies, is individual-centred and "colour-blind" (Edwards, 1994: 55).
  4. For a detailed discussion of illiteracy, illness and the poverty trap in China especially in her ethnic regions, see Yeoh (2008a: 43-46).

5. Including that of the highly Sinicized Manchurian Qing (Ch'ing 清) dynasty.
6. Year refers to publication date of English translation. Weber's original manuscript was written between 1910 and 1914.
7. Or in a different setting, take the case of Malaysia. According to Cheah (1984), the Malay ethnic identity (*bangsa Melayu*) was a creation after 1939 in response to the perceived threat from the increasingly politicized immigrants from China and India. The notion of a Malay race had therefore hitherto been absent, as Cheah elaborated: "[...] the Malays rose to confront what they considered threats posed by the immigrant races to their rights, but the Malays themselves had not been united as a race or a 'bangsa', and moreover they had not found a way to solve differences among themselves [... Such differences] were nurtured by the strong provincial feeling among the 'provincial Malays' (such as the Kelantan Malays, Perak Malays and so on), DKA Malays (those of Arab descent) and DKK Malays (those of Indian descent) [... There were also] tribal divisions, such as the Bugis, Minangkabau, Javanese, etc." (translated from Cheah, 1984: 83) The first open suggestion of a "Malay people" (*orang Melayu*) came only in 1939 when Ibrahim Yaacob (or I.K. Agastja by his Indonesian name) championed the notion of a unified Malay race across Malaya and Indonesia which he christened *Melayu Raya* (Great Malay) or *Indonesia Raya*. The boundary marker of ethnicity was thus mobilized to meet the rising need of identity investment for politico-economic purposes. An even more blatantly political ethnicization came after the 1969 riots in the creation of the "Bumiputera" race (*kaum Bumiputera*). *Bumiputera* (a term of Sanskrit origin meaning literally "prince of the land; son of the soil") became an official collective term grouping together the Malays, the aborigines and the natives of Sabah and Sarawak (both on the Borneo island) after these two regions joined the Peninsula in 1963 to form Malaysia. It excludes "immigrant races" like Chinese, Indians and Europeans, but not Arabs and Malays from Indonesia.
8. See Yeoh (2008b: 81). While emphasizing the importance of the ethnic factor in understanding the role of the State does not diminish the significance of contention between social classes, it serves to avoid the pitfall of reductionist Marxism, in which, as Wolpe (1988: 15) remarked, ethnicity "becomes merely an external instrument for the reproduction of class interests which are assumed to be *entirely* defined by the economic relation of production".
9. This contradistinction in proportion is apparent in the fact that "while the Han population in Sinkiang and Tibet was nil, in 1949 Han Chinese comprised more than half of the total population of all China's national minority areas averaged together" (Moseley, 1966: 14).
10. Did the completion in 2006 of the Qinghai-Tibet (Qing-Zang 青藏) railway, said to bring modernity and economic progress to Tibet, also signal a new phase of Sinicization of Tibet? This is a fear that the 14th Dalai Lama's Tibetan government-in-exile has not been hesitant to voice.
11. One of the most notable of such incidents, before the more recent riots in Lhasa and Ürümqi was the Han-Hui conflict in October 2004 that occurred in the Nanren 南仁 village and two other nearby villages in Henan province's Zhongmou 中牟 county, which allegedly killed more than 100 people including

at least 15 policemen, and injured more than 400 people. Though the conflict was probably triggered by a local traffic accident and rooted in strong historical-cultural factors including perceived overall Han dominance and backlash against certain preferential policies for the ethnic minorities, simmering tensions might have been exacerbated by China's economic success that led to a growing gap between rich and poor, especially in the countryside. Other than the Nanren conflict, there was also the unconfirmed news of another serious Han-Hui conflict in August 2007 in the Shimiao 石庙 township in Huimin 惠民 county of Shandong province, close to the Hui county of Shanghe 商河, that resulted in at least a death and more than twenty injured. This was not the first such open conflict in Shandong which earlier experienced the well-known "Yangxin 阳信 incident" in 2000 when six Hui were killed during a thousand-strong Hui protest against a "Qingzhen Zhurou 清真猪肉" [halal pork] shop sign.

12. 东方日报, 9th July 2009.
13. 东方日报, 30th July 2009.
14. Yale professor Amy Chua, in her highly controversial book *World on Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability* (2003) contended that the spread of free market democracy breeds ethnic violence in developing countries by simultaneously concentrating wealth in the hands of the ethnic minority and empowering the impoverished majority that resents the former. "The global spread of democratization reflects the powerful assumption in Western policy and intellectual circles that markets and democracy go hand in hand", wrote Chua, "But in the numerous countries around the world with a market-dominant minority, just the opposite has proved true. Adding democracy to markets has been a recipe for instability, upheaval, and ethnic conflagration [...] As markets enrich the market-dominant minority, democratization increases the political voice and power of the frustrated majority. The competition for votes fosters the emergence of demagogues who scapegoat the resented minority, demanding an end to humiliation, and insisting that the nation's wealth be reclaimed by its 'true owners.' [...] As popular hatred of the 'outsiders' mounts, the result is an ethnically charged political pressure cooker in which some form of backlash is almost unavoidable." (Chua, 2004: 124)
15. The spectre of China's disintegration has never ceased to haunt the generation of Chinese who have had the first-hand experience of China's humiliation at the hands of the Western powers and Japan up to the Second World War, to whom the *bainian guochi* 百年国耻 ("hundred years of national humiliation") is still crying out loud for redemption. This is the generation that today still makes up the leadership echelons in China, and leaders and respected intelligentsia in the overseas Chinese communities. This is the generation whose outlook having been shaped by their personal experience, among whom Beijing's stance that the benefits of stability under one-party rule far outweigh the risky endeavour of democratization and decentralization and that the human rights of the 1.3 billion-strong populace to be free from starvation and to be sheltered far outweigh the Western notion of freedom of speech and freedom of political choice would find resonance. This is a generation that the yearning and love for a great "Cultural China" (*Wenhua Zhongguo* 文化中国), and a China that could stand tall among

the community of nations, a China that is fast becoming a superpower, is all that counts in bestowing pride on one's Chinese ethnicity. Probably little else matters.

16. For instance, Mikhail Gorbachev may be a sinner blamed for the disintegration of the Russian-dominated Soviet Union in the eyes of the Russians, but could be remembered in history as the person who liberated the many long-tortured subordinate nationalities from the "prison of nations", especially from the perspective of the non-Russian citizens of the Soviet Union, who have long languished under Leninist-Stalinist totalitarianism, not to mention particularly the horrors of the Stalin years, ever since the days their quest for national self-determination was hijacked by the Bolsheviks: "According to history, the Empire of the czars was a 'prison of the peoples' and Lenin opened it. But history is never quite that simple. At the start of the twentieth century the empire was already showing signs of weakness; all its subject peoples were beginning to resent its domination and looking for ways to escape from it. Lenin's genius lies in having grasped the breadth of these desires for emancipation, and in having understood that by utilizing those desires – which had nothing to do with the working class – he could assure the victory of the workers in his own country." (Carrère d'Encausse, 1979: 13)
17. China's leaders, from Deng Xiaoping, Jiang Zemin to Hu Jintao have been vehemently against adopting Western liberal democracy for China, both for the fear that the Communist Party will lose its political dominance or China might disintegrate like the former Soviet Union. The nightmarish scenario of China's disintegration, and the most likely prospect of losing Xinjiang, Tibet, Inner Mongolia, probably also Qinghai and Ningxia, and of course Taiwan, and having China shrunk by half, alone is enough for the Communist Party leaders to convince many, not least among the overseas Chinese community leaders to shun the idea of democratization and regional political autonomy. The death of the Soviet Union hangs like the sword of Damocles to remind people that "[... when] Mikhail Gorbachev launched his radical political reform and initiated the process of political democratization in the former Soviet Union, scholars in the West argued that Gorbachev must be 'right' and China's Deng Xiaoping must be 'wrong.' [...] However, when Gorbachev's reforms eventually led to the collapse of the Soviet Union, Deng Xiaoping was proven 'right.'" (Zheng and Lye, 2004) The prevalence of such views that have fed into the collective fear somehow serves well in justifying the stance of China's current regime despite the value-loaded nature of judging right and wrong in this case. Soviet Union's disintegration is definitely wrong in the context of the preference for stability and territorial unity, but this is highly judgmental. Firstly, that a "nation" divided is destined to herald misery for the people might not be borne out by modern empirical evidence – the outstanding record of economic prosperity, political stability and human welfare of the many successor states of the former Austro-Hungarian empire, the Kalmar Union (the Danish empire) and, closer home, even the success of Taiwan. Of course, to generalize such successes could be as empirically unsound as to be consumed by the combination of ethno-national pride and the morbid fear of losing territorial domination, but sometimes, as the

proverb goes, the best things might just come in small parcels. Schumacher, in his now classic *Small Is Beautiful* (1973) proposed the idea of “smallness within bigness” – a form of decentralization whereby for a large organization to work it must behave like a related group of small organizations. “Man is small, and, therefore, small is beautiful”, Schumacher might just have a point. Secondly, the aspiration for a unified nation under the Han Chinese domination from the point of view of the Han Chinese should be indisputable, but whether this is true from the perspective of other non-Han Chinese people – “Chinese” as defined as “China’s citizens” – especially those that are ethnoterritorial would deserve further investigation.

18. See *2000 Population Census of China* and *Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook 2007*.
19. It took a brutal campaign of ethnic genocide to deliberately exterminate the Dzungars and it has been estimated that more than a million people were slaughtered.
20. These data were from the *2000 Population Census of China*. Official data for the year 2006 gave the proportion of Uyghurs as 45.92 per cent and that of Han as only 39.62 per cent of the total population of Xinjiang. See *Xinjiang Tongji Nianjian 2007*, pp. 82-87, Figure 4-7, which gave the year 2006 figures of 9,413,796 Uyghurs and 8,121,588 Han out of a total population of 20,500,000 people of Xinjiang.
21. *Times* (UK), 19th April 2009; 东方日报, 21st April 2009; *Scientific American*, July 2009; 东方日报, 1st August 2009. Not allowed into China, Takada obtained his results based on estimation by extrapolating his model with Xinjiang’s population density. Not allowed while in China to probe into the existence of disproportionate number of cases of malignant lymphomas, lung cancers, leukemia, degenerative disorders and deformed newborns, Enver Tohti, a Uyghur medical doctor who moved to Turkey 1998 ostensibly as part of his medical training and now works with Takada, claimed to have uncovered medical records showing Xinjiang’s higher-than-national-average cancer rates with a team of British documentary filmmakers whom he smuggled back into Xinjiang as tourists.
22. See *Xizang Tongji Nianjian 2007*, pp. 33-34, Figure 3-4, which gave the year 2005 figures of 2,549,293 Tibetans and 104,647 Han out of a total population of 2,675,520 people of Tibet.
23. Reference should be made here to the controversial hypothesis of Rabushka (1974) that a larger public sector makes ethnic conflict more likely.
24. From its humble beginnings in the 1980s, the Northern League – complete name *Lega Nord per l’Indipendenza della Padania* (North League for the Independence of Padania) – has since been transformed from a marginal protest force to a national movement strong enough to bring down the 1994 Centre-Right coalition by withdrawing from it. While having had its ups and downs over the years, the real or potential political force it represents could never be totally counted out in the Italian political arena. “Padania” (the ancient Italian term for the Po valley), as proposed by the Northern League, would contain the most powerful industries of Italy, its best agricultural land, almost all its financial wealth and its greatest cities including Venice (the proposed capital), Turin, Milan, Bologna and Genoa.

25. It is exactly the same sentiment that is threatening the Belgian nation, driving Flanders away from Wallonia.
26. See, for instance, Katherine Palmer Kaup's *Creating the Zhuang: Ethnic Politics in China* (2000).
27. A challenge that the unprecedented 2004 Han-Hui conflict in Henan had amply attested to.
28. Summarizing Shah and Qureshi's (1994) findings, Bird and Vaillancourt (1998: 18) noted: "[...] in Indonesia, Timor (one of the poorest provinces) has a per capita own-source revenue equivalent to 4 percent of Jakarta's [...] however, owing to transfer from the central government, Timor's per capita expenditures are 40 percent of those in Jakarta."
29. Referring to the 31 *sheng* (i.e. provinces of Anhui 安徽, Fujian 福建, Gansu 甘肃, Guangdong 广东, Guizhou 贵州, Hainan 海南, Hebei 河北, Heilongjiang 黑龙江, Henan 河南, Hubei 湖北, Hunan 湖南, Jiangsu 江苏, Jiangxi 江西, Jilin 吉林, Liaoning 辽宁, Qinghai 青海, Shaanxi 陕西, Shandong 山东, Shanxi 山西, Sichuan 四川, Yunnan 云南 and Zhejiang 浙江), *zizhiqu* (i.e. "autonomous regions" – each a first-level administrative subdivision having its own local government, and a minority entity that has a higher population of a particular minority ethnic group – of Guangxi 广西 of the Zhuang, Nei Mongol/Inner Mongolia 内蒙古 of the Mongols, Ningxia 宁夏 of the Hui, Xizang/Tibet 西藏 of the Tibetans and Xinjiang 新疆 of the Uyghurs) and *zhixiashi* (municipalities under the central government – Beijing 北京, Chongqing 重庆, Shanghai 上海 and Tianjin 天津).
30. As Cook and Murray (2001: 126-127) succinctly summarized: "Three of China's four largest coal fields are in this area, as well as four of the most important oil fields. Some 140 kinds of mineral ores have been detected along with large reserves of bauxite for processing into aluminium, and gold. The Qaidam Basin in the middle of Qinghai Province, home to a large Tibetan population, for example, is described by local officials as the province's 'treasure bowl', containing proven oil reserves of 200 million tons, as well as 4.5 billion tons of mostly high-quality coal with low ash and sulphur content. Under the Kunlun and Qilian mountains are large proven caches of iron, manganese, chromium, vanadium, copper, lead, zinc, nickel, tin, molybdenum, antimony, mercury, gold, silver, platinum, beryllium and selenium. The iron reserves are estimated at 2.2 billion tons, and the province claims the country's largest lead and zinc mines, and is a primary producer of asbestos. The Hui people in the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region, meanwhile, are sitting on large proven reserves of oil and natural gas, along with mineral resources such as copper, iron, silver, gold, aluminium and nickel. The growing prosperity of Xinjiang is being built on the back of developments in the vast and inhospitable Tarim Basin, where experts reckon there are reserves of up to 100 billion barrels of oil and 8,300 billion cubic metres of natural gas."
31. "Bi-ethnic" in terms of major power structure and socioeconomic relations, though the region's population consists of more than two ethnic groups.
32. 世界日報 (*World Journal*) (US), editorial on 16th July 2009, reprinted in 东方日报, 18th July 2009.

33. See *Xinjiang Statistical Yearbook 2007*, pp. 82-87, Figure 4-7, which gave the year 2006 figures of 254,722 Uyghurs and 1,507,720 Han out of a total population of 2,018,443 people of the city of Ürümqi.
34. In another setting, for instance, in a country like Belgium, the tilting of the ethnic line is evident, with Flanders overtaking Wallonia economically since the 1960s and bringing with it increasing politico-economic leverage on the part of the Flemish community. It is Wallonia's fear of Belgium being slowly transformed into a Flemish-dominated country, coupled with the continued insecurity felt by the Flemish community over its new-found power, which is fuelling the interethnic discord of the country and threatening to tear the country apart.
35. Gunther (1980: 223, 258) described public investment decision making in Spain during the Franco era as more closely conforming to the "clientelistic", rather than "corporatist", model. For more on the clientelist model, see Brown (1989) and Clapham (1982: 6-7).
36. 东方日报, 10th July 2009.
37. Brown (1989) was of the opinion that while in some types of clientelist systems the patron-client networks may serve to cut across and weaken ethnic communal ties (especially where the patron-client relationship arises out of the competition for individual goods such as contracts or jobs), clientelism may also promote the politicization of regional and ethnic communalism, where the focus of competition is on communal goods such as public amenities and development projects. Anyway, the politicization of ethnicity tends to become the more likely result of clientelism where leaders at the state-level seek to mobilize popular support so as to promote their political positions. Appeals to ethnic solidarity provide a useful basis for such mobilization, while at the same time cutting across and inhibiting class alignments. A notable impact of the personalized politics of clientelism is "to promote the politics of competitive ethnicity, in which inter-ethnic rivalry is pursued through the activities of entrepreneurs, patrons and brokers" (*ibid.*: 52). Factional instability which may ensue is minimized where one patrimonial leader and his entourage are able to acquire monopoly control of the State and thence of resource distribution, while ethnic communal clienteles are "politically mobilized by their communal influentials who act as brokers, delivering their communal group support to the patrimonial élites in return for the promise of state resources" (*ibid.*).
38. 世界日報 (*World Journal*) (US), editorial on 16th July 2009; reprinted in 东方日报, 18th July 2009.
39. 东方日报, 8th July 2009.
40. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762), *Émile, ou De l'éducation*, translated by Allan Bloom with introduction, New York: Basic Books, 1979.
41. There is a tendency in academic circles to distinguish between socially defined and biologically defined races – "ethnie" and "race". An ethnie or ethnic group is said to exist when three conditions are present – "a segment of a larger society is seen by others to be different in some combination of the following characteristics – language, religion, race and ancestral homeland with its related culture; the members also perceive themselves in that way; and they participate in shared activities built around their (real or mythical) common

origin and culture [and] a nation [is] an ethnic group that claims the right to, or at least a history of, statehood" (Yinger, 1986: 22). In contrast with "racial groups" which are biological categories based on immutable, physical attributes fixed at birth, "ethnic groups" are defined by a much wider range of cultural, linguistic, religious and national characteristics, with a more flexible form of group differentiation. Therefore, the term "racial" should more appropriately be used to describe group distinction on the basis of phenotypical (i.e. physical) characteristics, while "ethnic" refers to those based solely or partly on cultural characteristics (Yeoh, 2003: 26). The term "ethnic" can also be generalized to be a blanket concept (Hoetink's attribute "socioracial") to cover both the above distinctions. The term "cultural" here mainly covers the ascriptive attributes "ethnolinguistic" and "ethnoreligious". The emphasis on language and religion in empirical research is due mainly to the fact that they are the relatively less vague factors in the fourfold categorization of ascriptive loyalty (Hoetink, 1975: 23-4). While "racial" – meaning phenotypical – differences is only skin deep, ethnic boundary as a process (*à la* Barth, 1969) tends to be tenacious and uncompromising, the manifestation of the age-old fourfold ascriptive loyalty of race, territoriality, language and religion (Yeoh, 2006: 224). However, racial and ethnic characteristics thus defined often overlap in any one group while extremely deep divisions are often found between groups whose racial as well as ethnic differences are actually imperceptible, e.g. the Burakumin, the so-called "invisible race" of Japan.

42. 光华日报 (*Kwong Wah Yit Poh*, Malaysian Daily), 4th August 2010.
43. Yan Jiaqi 严家其 (严家祺) was a political advisor of Zhao Ziyang during the 1980s and a prominent intellectual supporting the student-led pro-democracy movement of 1989. Fled to Paris after the June Fourth massacre, he participated in forming the Federation for a Democratic China of which he was elected first president. Yan's confederation proposal was for a *Chunghua Lienpang Kunghekuo* 中華聯邦共和國 ("Federal Republic of China"), a "Third Republic" – the first republic being the *Chunghua Minkuo* 中華民國 (Republic of China) and the second, *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo* 中华人民共和国 (People's Republic of China).
44. Charter 08, signed in December 2008 by over three hundred prominent Chinese citizens, was conceived and written in emulation of the founding of Charter 77 in former Czechoslovakia in January 1977 by over two hundred Czech and Slovak intellectuals, including the future Czech president Václav Havel. Charter 08's number of signatories, local and overseas, later increased to about 7000 by March 2009 (东方日报, 14th March 2009). Liu Xiaobo, the leading dissident arrested and jailed, also played a prominent role in the 1989 Tiananmen 天安门 demonstrations and hunger strikes. Liu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on 8th October 2010.
45. Translated from the Chinese by Perry Link. <[http://crd-net.org/Article/Class9/Class10/200812/20081210142700\\_12297.html](http://crd-net.org/Article/Class9/Class10/200812/20081210142700_12297.html)>
46. Ethnic division may be territorial in some countries but not in others, thus making it difficult for federalization along ethnic lines. An ethnic faction can be a homeland group while the other or others may be immigrants, giving rise to imbalance in ethnic intensity, national legitimacy and power of negotiation.



47. For instance, the 14th Dalai Lama's proposal for Tibetan autonomy has always been accused by Beijing as a disguise for his alleged Tibetan independence agenda.
48. One of the earliest proposals in China of decentralization along federal lines is probably that found in the oath of the Hsing Chung Hui 興中會 (Revive China Society), founded in 1894 by Sun Chung-shan 孫中山/Sun Wen 孫文/Sun I-hsien 孫逸仙 (leading revolutionary, founder of republican China, more popularly known outside China as Sun Yat-sen) – the establishment of a *hechung* 合眾 government, i.e. government of a “union of many”. In fact, with fourteen provinces proclaiming independence from the Ch'ing 清 dynasty to reunite as the Republic of China/*Chunghua Minkuo* 中華民國 during the Hsinhai 辛亥 Revolution, Sun Yat-sen in 1912 took the title “President of the Provisional Government of the United Provinces of China” – *liensheng* 聯省 (“united provinces”) presumably suggesting a less regionally independent arrangement than *lienpang* 聯邦 (“federation”) or the US-style *hechungkuo* 合眾國 (“united states”), partly reflecting reservation against earlier *liensheng tzuchih* 聯省自治 (“united autonomous provinces”) proposals since the 1920s, lest too much regional autonomy might jeopardize the country's badly needed ability at that time to resist foreign aggression as well as might legitimize the hated rule of the regional warlords. Regional autonomy has in fact not really always been a no-no as was usually presumed in the political discourse within the People's Republic of China. In fact, a soviet federal republic, modeled after the union republics of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, was obviously on the cards, with autonomous constituent republics planned for the ethnic regions like Inner Mongolia, Tibet and Xinjiang/Eastern Turkestan, at the time when a Chinese Soviet Republic was established in Jiangxi province and then during the *changzheng* 长征 (“Long March”) a small autonomous republic for Tibetans was set up in Sichuan province. By the time of Yan'an 延安, such nationality policy had undergone a transformation, and in 1947 the Inner Mongolia “Autonomous Region”, the first of its kind in China, was created, not “Autonomous Republic”. Before the complete consolidation of power, the PRC which was established in 1949 consisted of six semi-independent “greater administrative areas”. The central government in Beijing, just transferred from the People's Government of North China, in effect only had direct control of northern China and Inner Mongolia, while other “greater administrative areas” enjoyed a substantial level of autonomy, all of which but ended by 1954.
49. The Republic of China (ROC), controlling only the Taiwan 台灣 province, is today recognized by 23 mostly small countries. The ROC lost most of her diplomatic allies after she was expelled from the United Nations in 1971, as many countries dropped her to recognize the People's Republic of China (PRC), including Costa Rica, one of Latin America's most democratic countries, on 7th June 2007 – a bitter irony, according to Taiwan – within four days of the year's anniversary of the 1989 tragedy.
50. Judgement on the event, positive or negative, of course depends on from whose point of view, e.g. the Great Russians or the peoples of the captive nations of the former USSR.

51. For Taiwan's ratings on political rights and civil liberties *vis-à-vis* China, see Figure 16 in this issue's prologue on social transformation. *En passant*, probably also noteworthy is that with the collapse of the Ch'ing Dynasty that led to the repatriation of the imperial troops from the region, Tibet (today China's Xizang Zizhiqu) was in every respect virtually on her own from 1911 to 1950.
52. 东方日报, 20th July 2009.
53. The State's difficulty to face up to domestic realities is probably manifested in the continued repression in the aftermath of the riots including the arrest of ethnic Uyghur economics professor Ilham Tohti of China's Central Nationalities University and founder of the "Uighur Online" on 7th July 2009 and the revocation of licenses of civil rights lawyers who took up cases related to the Xinjiang riots (东方日报, 10th July 2009, 15th July 2009 and 17th July 2009). After a storm of protest from Chinese intellectuals and academics against the arrest, Ilham Tohti was finally released on 23rd August 2009 (东方日报, 11th September 2009).
54. There are two types of argument, normative and functional, noted Tillin (2006: 46-47), made in favour of asymmetrical federalism: "The normative case rests on a moral argument about the desirability of cultural group rights and the politics of recognition in multinational liberal democracies. Crudely, this theory of federalism elevates asymmetry to a system-wide attribute of a federation that reflects the acceptance and recognition of difference across a polity. The functional case relies instead on arguments about what exists and what works. This argument often uses the adjective 'asymmetrical' interchangeably with 'creative' or 'flexible' to denote individual instances in which solutions have been sought (successfully or otherwise) within a federal constitution to one-off problems of governance. The functional argument is sometimes underdeveloped, but used simply to code India as a case of asymmetry for comparative purposes."
55. Citing Manor's argument, Tillin opined that an emphasis on asymmetry as a normative concept in India could "lead to a sidelining of other factors in the country's nationalist discourse, and historical inheritance, which downplay the significance of subnational differences", for, citing Nandy (1992), Indian public culture "does not have space for the Other, instead it has an open, blurred definition of the self which allows it to accommodate Others with which it might be in conflict" (Tillin, 2006: 62).
56. O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986: 9) opined that a transition from authoritarian rule could produce a democracy, but it could also terminate with a liberalized authoritarian regime (*dictablanda*) or a restrictive, illiberal democracy (*democradura*) (cited in Diamond, 2002: 24).
57. Bo Yibo, the former Chinese vice-premier, was in fact expressing the reformers' feeling towards the lessons of the multiple cycles of administrative decentralization and recentralization in China: "A [more] important and fundamental lesson of the [1958] attempt to improve the economic management system is: We only saw the vices of overcentralization of power, and sought to remedy the situation by decentralizing powers to the lower levels. When we felt too much power had been decentralized, we recentralized them. We did not then

recognize the inadequacies of putting sole emphasis on central planning (and in particular a system dominated by mandatory planning) and totally neglecting and denying the role of the market [...] As a result over a long period of time (after the 1958 decentralization) we were trapped within the planned economy model. Adjustments and improvements could only work around the cycles of decentralization and recentralization. Moreover the recipients of more powers are invariably the local governments, rather than enterprises.” (Bo Yibo 薄一波, *Ruogan Zhongda Juece yu Shijian de Huigu* 若干重大决策与事件的回顾 [Looking back at some important decisions and events], 1993, p. 804, cited in Li, 2003: 1.)

$$58. \text{EFI} = 1 - \sum_{i=1}^n \left( \frac{n_i}{N} \right) \left( \frac{n_i - 1}{N - 1} \right)$$

where  $n$  = the number of members of the  $i$ th group and  $N$  = the total number of people in the population. The index is constructed through the computational procedure of Rae and Taylor's index of fragmentation (F), defined as the probability that a randomly selected pair of individuals in a society will belong to different groups (Rae and Taylor, 1970: 22-3). The index varies from 0 to 1. The value is zero for a completely homogeneous country (the probability of belonging to different groups is nil). The value 1 occurs in the hypothetical society where each individual belongs to a different group. The fragmentation index is identical to Rae's measure of party system fractionalization (Rae, 1967: 55-8) and Greenberg's measure of linguistic diversity (Greenberg, 1956):

$$A = 1 - \sum_{i=1}^n (P_i)^2$$

where  $P$  = the proportion of total population in the  $i$ th language group.

For data sources of the computation of EFI for this appendix table, see Yeoh (2003: 33-36), Table 2.

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### Part III (123-131)

## Reform, Governance and Sociopolitical Change in Contemporary China

## INTRODUCTION

### Reform, Governance and Sociopolitical Change in Contemporary China

In various ways this 2011 special issue of the *IJCS*, *Reform, Governance and Equity: Exploring the Sociopolitical Implications of Contemporary China's Transformation*, represents a follow-up to the earlier, 2010 special issue *China in Transition: Social Change in the Age of Reform* which began the journal's exploratory focus on indeed the most fundamental and critical issue in contemporary China's astonishing transformation, especially if one takes social changes as to encompass both socioeconomic and sociopolitical transitions. As the contents of each of the papers collected in this special issue have been summarized in the respective abstracts, this introduction will not attempt to purvey the synopses of these articles but to contemplate each as part of the whole exploration on reform, governance and sociopolitical change within the context of a transforming China.

Professor David McMullen's paper "Devolution in Chinese History: The *Fengjian* Debate Revisited" aptly begins the issue under the section *Historical Proem* by bringing us on a journey to the Kaiyuan Tianbao 開元天寶 period (years 713-756 of the Common Era) of medieval China's Tang dynasty and various other periods in pre-modern China to critically examine the pre-modern debate on political or administrative devolution, contending that one of the main headings under which this long-running issue about the degree of centralization was discussed is the subject of *fengjian* 封建. Schneider (2003: 33) hypothesizes three core dimensions of the concept of decentralization: (1) fiscal decentralization referring to the extent of a central government's ceding of fiscal impact to non-central government entities, (2) administrative decentralization referring to the extent of autonomy non-central government entities possess relative to central control, (3) political decentralization referring to how much a central government allows non-central government entities to undertake the political functions of governance such as representation, and while political decentralization has usually been observed to go hand in hand with democratization, McMullen urges caution against the over-simplistic argument that *fengjian* even in its final phase involved a demand for a sophisticated civil society at local levels free of

domination by the State, as the most that can be said about *fengjian* is its call for a localism free from excessive central government exploitation and control, a common theme that has in various ways permeated through the many articles selected for this special issue. Such is, under the section *Governance, Democracy and Decentralization*, when Professor Brantly Womack in his paper “Modernization and the Sino-Vietnamese Model”, which analyzes the distinctive model of political development in the contemporary “party-state survivors” of China and Vietnam and the challenges posed to modernization theory by the Sino-Vietnamese experience, talks about the increased local transparency and accountability and articulation of local interests while the Communist Party, being disillusioned with “socialist transformation” but still firmly in power, places its dogma “on a remote altar while [it] preserves and justifies itself by tending to the pastoral duties relating to the welfare of the flock”. Such is also when Professor Huang Weiping and Dr Chen Jiaxi in their paper “China’s Grassroots Democracy: Development and Assessment”, which studies the practice and logic of the evolution of grassroots democracy during the reform era, talk about the importance of “inborn democracy” (*neishengxing minzhu* 内生型民主), within the context of the development of grassroots democracy and inner party democracy, which includes villagers’ self-governance, independent participation in grassroots people’s congress elections, the property owners committee, and the people’s congress representative workstation, all having strong support from the public and are led by effective local opinion leaders yet facing restrictions from local authorities which fear social instability and the threat to the authority of the ruling party.

Such contradictions between the central State power and a growing civil society seeking greater autonomy free from the former’s tight control also constitute the subject matter of various papers under the section *Social Stratification, State and the Civil Society* which focus respectively on issues ranging from socioeconomic inequalities, interregional disparities, rural-urban divide, plight of social minorities and marginal communities as well as the conflict between the central State and the ethnoregional minorities struggling for greater autonomy and rights to ethnic identity preservation, socioeconomic protection and self-determination. Among these are Dr Qian Forrest Zhang’s paper “Rethinking the Rural-Urban Divide in China’s New Stratification Order” that attempts to re-evaluate the rural-urban divide while calling for a re-definition of the concept of “rurality” in a new market economy where household registration is no longer a barrier to rural-urban migration and where the “proletarianized urban workers who are exposed to the brute forces of markets” are even more worse off than the agricultural petty-commodity producers in the rural areas, and Dr Zhong Sheng’s “Towards China’s Urban-Rural Integration: Issues and Options” which looks at the challenges

of China's CURD (Coordinated Urban-Rural Development/*chengxiang tongchou* 城乡统筹) reforms that have been conducted with various local ramifications. Within this context, recalling the localism that McMullen's paper highlighted above, it is noteworthy that in recent years, local and international organizations around the world are increasingly advocating decentralization to bring about more effective poverty reduction and hence the narrowing of socioeconomic gap, with both the direct effects on the regional targeting of transfers and the indirect effects of overcoming the inefficiency in local public services and hampered economic growth related to sub-optimal decentralization (von Braun and Grote, 2000: 2) and this is particularly pertinent for China given the context of the ethnoregional dimension of the poverty problem. Although theoretically there may not be a clear-cut functioning relationship between decentralization and poverty reduction, most research findings in recent years definitely pointed to the positive. According to von Braun and Grote (2000), political, administrative and fiscal decentralizations need to be considered simultaneously, and the sequencing and pace of these three aspects of decentralization seem to play an important role in impacting poverty reduction. While fiscal decentralization shows ambivalent effects for poverty reduction and administrative decentralization alone does not add power and voice to the poor, "political decentralization often benefits the poor, because involving civil society in planning, monitoring and evaluating public programs and policies is crucial to ensure steady progress and that is facilitated in a decentralized system" (*ibid.*: 25-26), or, as Boex *et al.*, referring to UNCHR's statement "Poverty is local and it can only be fought at the local level" (UNCHR, 1999), pointed out in their research report "Fighting Poverty through Fiscal Decentralization" (January 2006: 2), "if the increasingly accepted wisdom that 'all poverty is local' is correct, then decentralization policy and poverty reduction strategies could be closely intertwined and have synergetic positive effects on each other". Kyei (2000), in his study on the case of Ghana, concluded that the rural poor in Ghana could only benefit with a much stronger commitment from the central government to decentralization, especially in terms of powersharing and financial provision. Vijayanand (2001), in his paper on the Kerala state of India, noted various advantages of decentralization in terms of poverty reduction including the greater reach of resources with earmarking of funds for the disadvantaged groups, less sectoralism in decentralized programmes with greater convergence contributing to the reduction in the ratchet effect of poverty, greater emphasis on locally appropriate and affordable solutions, greater realism in tackling problems of poverty, improved accountability, etc. while decentralization "affords opportunities to the poor to grow in strength by continuous participation (learning by doing), constant observation of the exercise of power (learning by seeing) and accessing more information

(learning by knowing)” (p. 23). Hence, given the crucial ethnoregional dimension of China’s poverty problem, it is pertinent that the poverty alleviation effort of the country should benefit from any possible progress in decentralization – fiscal, administrative, and most importantly, political – since decentralized governments, due to their closeness both institutionally (e.g. ethnically) and spatially to citizens in the regional/rural areas, could be more responsive to the needs of the poor than the central government and hence are more likely to successfully formulate and implement pro-poor policies and programmes in these regions and areas.

As Dr Emile Kok-Kheng Yeoh points out in his paper “Stratification, Social Action and Morphogenesis: Structures and Agents in Contemporary China’s Social Transformation”, the distribution of China’s poor is characterized by “four concentrations”: (1) concentration in the mountainous areas, (2) concentration in the western region, (3) concentration in environmentally fragile areas, and (4) concentration in ethnic minority areas, hence reflecting a composite phenomenon made up of rural poverty, geographical poverty, ethnic poverty and frontier poverty, which has undoubtedly been playing an important role in the recent years’ ethnic riots in the country’s frontier regions. The issue of Uyghur urban unemployment amidst Han influx is also pointed out in David O’Brien’s paper, “The Mountains Are High and the Emperor Is Far Away: An Examination of Ethnic Violence in Xinjiang”, which focuses on the devastating outbreak of violence in Xinjiang in July 2009, the role of the hard-line party secretary Wang Lequan and the central State’s strategy and policy towards this restive ethnic region. While worsening interethnic relations especially in view of the surging Han influx and the relative economic backwardness of the local ethnic communities and environmental degradation especially in the form of receding grassland due to mining and overgrazing have been blamed for the escalating ethnic regional disturbances, both O’Brien and Yeoh, nevertheless, emphasize the overall political structure and State policy towards dissent as the major contributing factors for the increasing volatility of the ethnic regions, as manifest in recent years’ troubles in Tibet, Xinjiang and Inner Mongolia. In this regard, O’Brien has focused on the widening gap between the central State’s official policy for ethnic regions and ethnic minorities policy and what is actually happening on the ground – a gap similarly emphasized by Yeoh in the form of the inability of a regime to face the unfolding political realities while continuing to recycle the shopworn Leninist conspiracy theories that blame mass protests primarily on the Party’s foreign and domestic enemies, especially the foreign forces hostile to socialism bending on fostering a process of “peaceful evolution”, as highlighted by Womack, exemplified in recent years by the high-profile Charter 08 in China in 2008 and 2006’s “Manifesto on Freedom and Democracy for Vietnam”.

The 1989 Beijing-Tiananmen upheaval and tragedy, the purge of Zhao Ziyang and the obliteration of the one and only political reform package in the history of the Chinese Communist Party which attempted to introduce the most far-reaching political structural reforms such as the separation of power between Party and State, proposed by Zhao earlier at the 13th Party Congress in October 1987, undeniably formed the watershed that serves to define subsequent State-civil society interactions and the concomitant development in China's political and socioeconomic structure, as well as central State-ethnic regional relations (Yeoh, 2010: 278-280). Continued survival of one-party rule became the paramount concern, as Yeoh highlights in this special issue, as the prime directive of "stability above all else" and the ruthless "dissent-harmonizing" maintenance of a "harmonious society" delineated a safe zone wherein political "seemers" are parading administrative innovations as political reforms and political fudge (*zhengzhi huyou* 政治忽悠) as visionary leadership. As Dr Jay Wysocki comments in his paper "Efficiency, Value and the 21st-Century Developmental State: The Transition of China", which examines the origin and role of efficient industrialization as the vector of social change and how rapid industrialization confronts China with the social value for efficiency forcing accommodation by the society, the "capitalism of a different sort shapes a state of a different sort with non-transparent interest groups and decision making" facilitated internally by "strong" Asian Value which encourages a weak civil society, with a State sufficiently authoritarian to satisfy its élite. It is within such a setting that the modern-era Chinese Communist Party in a fast-transforming Chinese economy is itself being transformed, as pointed out in Dr Ngeow Chow Bing's paper "Community Party Building in Urban China", which analyzes the community party building programme in urban China in the transformation of the Chinese Communist Party from a "revolutionary party" to a "governing party" and the relationship between the party organization and local democratic development, by co-opting, integrating and monitoring the interests of all elements of the society which it ironically would not tolerate to form the basis of political pluralism, in a process of turning itself into a party that exhibits certain features of probably a so-called "catch-all" party. Meanwhile, having been disillusioned with the once-revolutionary vision of socialist transformation while still maintaining the monopoly of political power, as Womack observes, the Party now "attracts risk-avoiding careerists rather than risk-taking revolutionaries". Such "post-revolutionary syndrome" may not only afflicts new recruits, as Yeoh observes, when instead of statesmen with conscience and prescience, holding the helm are but visionless, overcautious political careerists resplendent in hollow, sentimental rhetoric and showmanship, being both the products and survivors of the yesteryear of Maoist horror and still reeling from the shock of the perceived political



debacle of 1989. Meanwhile, as Émile Durkheim (1895) said, “The air does not cease to have weight, although we no longer feel that weight”, brewing social forces bringing along subliminal emergent changes continue to threaten to subvert the stability of well laid-out projectable changes envisaged by the ruling regime (Yeoh, 2010: 241-245), aided in no small measure by the advent of the Internet Age, as Dr Chin-fu Hung observes in his paper “The Politics of Electronic Social Capital and Public Sphere in Chinese *Lala* Community: Implications for Civil Society” which explores the politics of cyber-networks and cyber social bonds in the Chinese lesbian community as well as its wider implications for the Chinese civil society, and Professor Joseph Tse-Hei Lee notes in his review article in this volume, “Media and Dissent in China: A Review”. While Hung emphasizes that the Internet has effectively empowered individuals, including the marginalized and once-persecuted homosexual community, and the society as a whole “by diversifying newer sources of alternative/dissenting information and channels for civic association and engagement”, in the repressive, authoritarian China, Lee comments in his review that no authoritarian regime or leader, who not only rules by fear but also rules in fear, is capable of imposing absolute control without challenge and compromise amidst the current global electronic network transformation, as evident in the astounding “Jasmine Revolutions” that are sweeping the Arab world and reverberating in the nightmares of the Chinese leaders. Such is the impact of globalization.

In fact, comprising one fifth of humanity and having risen to be the world’s second largest economy in terms of gross domestic product, China’s economic and political development is today no longer solely a matter of her own domestic concern, but is increasingly acquiring new dimensions that have a powerful impact across her borders, as Professor Solomon Cohen notes in his paper “Leadership Displacement and the Redesign of Global Governance: The Race of China and India” which analyzes the unique catch-up trends of China and India in the context of leadership displacement in global governance, substantive redesigns of whose rules are deemed required given that the systemic differences in the case of China and India *vis-à-vis* the current firm-dominated leading countries such as US and EU are likely to accentuate externality problems at the global level. Returning to the issue of State-civil society relations within the context of such a globalizing world, Phoebe Luo Mingxuan, Dr John Donaldson and Dr Qian Forrest Zhang in their paper “The Transformation of China’s Agriculture System and Its Impact on Southeast Asia”, which examines the impacts on the poor and vulnerable Southeast Asian farmers from the investment of Chinese agribusinesses, note that the civil society may be able to fill the void left by the government in protecting the interests of poor farmers in the negotiations for better contractual terms with the investors, including those from China, though

governments often resort to repress the NGOs, “fearing the creation of a public space that they cannot control”, as the political forces behind issues that on the surface seem to be voluntary exchanges should not be ignored. Such forces are at work too even in international sports events such as the Beijing Olympics of 2008, as pointed out by Professor Brian Bridges in his paper “Beyond The Olympics: Power, Change and Legacy” that begins the section *Social Change, Power Configuration and Global Governance*. Focusing on the expectations, immediate results and potential longer-term legacies of the Beijing Olympics, the paper has paid due attention to their use by the government both for domestic economic and political purposes and as an instrument of foreign relations. While noting the limitation of the success of the Beijing Olympics in extending China’s “soft power” and winning over the hearts of the Western public, Bridges also highlights the complexity of what Jeffrey Wasserstrom calls “transitology” – effectively the transitions away from one-party rule – by observing the lack of the intention on the part of the Chinese leaders, in contrast to the South Korean precedent, to use the sports mega-event to pave the way for democratization, citing the irony in the arrest in early 2011 of Ai Weiwei, one of the key designers of the iconic Bird’s Nest stadium for the Beijing Olympics.

As McMullen notes in his paper that begins this special issue, statism tended to overwhelm the discussion of political issues and hence eclipse the recognition of any incipient development of a civil society in the statecraft discourse of late imperial and Republican China, the analyses presented in the research papers collected in this volume have thus revealed the complex nexus involved in the arduous journey of sociopolitical transformation and development of State-civil society relations in the current Chinese context of reform and governance. This volume ends with Yongqiang Li, Professor Anona Armstrong and Professor Andrew Clarke’s policy comments and research notes “Governance of Small Businesses in China: An Institutional Perspective” and Professor Joseph Tse-Hei Lee’s book review article “Media and Dissent in China: A Review” that critically analyzes Johan Lagerkvist’s 2010 book *After the Internet, Before Democracy: Competing Norms in Chinese Media and Society*. As this is a special issue, an index is added to facilitate referencing.

Earlier versions of many of the papers in this special issue were presented at the international conference “Growth, Governance and Equity: Exploring the Social Implications of China’s Economic Transformation” organized by the Institute of China Studies (ICS), University of Malaya, in June 2011. The selected papers by McMullen (originally the keynote to the conference), Huang and Chen, Ngeow, Bridges, Wysocki, Zhang, Zhong, Hung, Yeoh, and Li, Armstrong and Clarke are new versions of their earlier papers presented at the said conference, duly revised by incorporating critical

peer feedback received at the conference and from other reviewers. The editor and the Institute of China Studies would like to thank these conference presenters who have taken great effort to revise their papers for inclusion in this special issue, and the other authors who have contributed some great new papers to this issue as well as the anonymous reviewers who have given invaluable assistance in providing critical comments on the earlier versions of these papers.

Finally, I would like to thank Miss Susie Yieng-Ping Ling 林燕萍, editorial manager of the journal, for her impeccable administrative help in making the publication of this 2011 special issue *Reform, Governance and Equity: Exploring the Sociopolitical Implications of Contemporary China's Transformation* on time possible. I am also grateful to Mr Lionel Wei-Li Liong 梁偉立 for his technical help in cover design, Miss Susie Yieng-Ping Ling and Dr Chan Sok Gee 陳淑儀 for their assistance in indexing, Mr Ivan Foo Ah Hiang 符亞强 for his excellent typesetting, Dr Ling Tek Soon 林德順 for his help in checking the final proofs, Dr Ngeow Chow Bing 饒兆斌 for his editorial assistance with the *Governance, Democracy and Decentralization* articles, and Dr Mario Arturo Ruiz Estrada for first introducing us to Professor Solomon Cohen's works. The responsibility for any errors and inadequacies that remain is of course fully mine.

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## Part IV (407-504)

Stratification, Social Action and Morphogenesis:  
Structures and Agents in Contemporary China's  
Social Transformation

## **Stratification, Social Action and Morphogenesis: Structures and Agents in Contemporary China's Social Transformation**

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### **Abstract**

The process of social change typically involves a combination of four different components: context, institutions, agents and events. Upon the praxis between operating structures and purposely acting human agents, agency is constantly shaped by structure which in turn is being reshaped in the process. Amidst the dynamic interplay of such an array of critical socioeconomic factors that underlie the surging currents of social change, the role of the individual as a catalyst for change cannot be underestimated, even if the long-term impact of the individual's action is not immediately explicit and the lone crusade involved does not receive adequate sympathy of the wider public. Such is the tragedy of the commons. Beginning with the problem of increasing inequality and ethnoregional dimension of poverty which together constitute the epitome as well as the root of China's social ills resulted from her recent decades of continuous, astounding economic *tour de force*, this paper examines contemporary China's social transformation as a phenomenon that is neither simple nor unidimensional, wherein social and in particular sociopolitical change could be said not to be a multiattribute concept, but a *multiconcept* construct. Due attention is paid to various different dimensions of such changes, both positive and negative, including socioeconomic inequalities, socioracial stratification, ethnoregional disparities and State-civil society relations, in particular the structure-agency interface in the challenge of ACES (active citizenship and effective State) evolvment. At any one time, certain dimensions may increase in severity, while others remain constant or decline. Certain dimensions or variables are considerably more difficult to measure than others but their inclusion is essential to provide a comprehensive view of the challenges of China's social transformation in her contemporary reform era.

**Keywords:** *State, inequality, élite, dissent, structure, agency, morphogenesis, morphostasis, civil rights, activism*

**JEL classification:** *H11, H12, Z10, Z13*

## 1. Introduction

In the government document “Scientific Concept of Development and Harmonious Society” that formed *the* theme of China’s 17th National Congress of the Communist Party, 2007 (15th–21st October 2007), it was reiterated that “[t]o coordinate development among different regions, we should promote the common development of all regions. Regional gaps are not only found between eastern China and western China, but also between provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the central government. This problem should be gradually addressed in the course of industrialization, urbanization and market development.”<sup>1</sup> While brief, this statement reflects the probably understated concern of the ruling regime of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) over the widening gap in economic development between eastern and western China, between rural and urban population, and between different social strata. In spite of the astounding economic performance – nothing short of a miracle – over the past few decades, China is undeniably facing acute problems on various fronts. For instance, agriculture accounted for only about 14.6 per cent of China’s gross domestic product (GDP) in 2003 but 49.5 per cent of her labour force, while up to 59.5 per cent of the country’s total population is rural. This is in addition to the fact that only 13 per cent of China consists of arable land and the country has 40 per cent less arable land per capita than anywhere else in the world. Hence, with more people and less arable land in rural areas, the country has a lower comparative advantage in agriculture, and investments have therefore been concentrated in the cities and industries and this has led to increasing rural-urban disparities in socioeconomic development and income distribution (Bi, 2005: 114), as well as the increasingly alarming socioeconomic disparity between the country’s eastern, coastal regions and the inland, especially western, regions.

To place them in the proper perspective, such problems in development that China is facing today could be said to be by nature the same ones that many other developing countries were experiencing in the second half of the last century and now at the beginning of this century. Woo *et al.* (2004) found that of United Nations’ 15 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)<sup>2</sup> relevant for China (targets 1–12, 15, 17–18), the country has already achieved 1.5, made above-average progress in 6, and attained satisfactory progress in 1. In summary, China is on-track for 8.5 targets, off-track on 4, and has made unknown progress on 2.5. In general, China’s amelioration of the poverty problem has been nothing less than remarkable. In 1978, China’s population in poverty totaled 250 million. Entering the new millennium, poverty has been reduced to 29.27 million in 2001, 28.2 million in 2002 and 29 million by 2003, with the incidence of poverty having declined from 30 per cent to

just 3.1 per cent, according to official figures. (*IDE Spot Survey*, 2001, p. 54, Table 1; Chen, 2006: 174)

In fact, with rural poverty rate declining from 31.3 per cent in 1990 to 10.9 per cent in 2002, China had greatly exceeded MDG's Target 1 which only requires that the poverty rate be halved in the 1990-2015 period (Woo *et al.*, 2004). However, as Woo *et al.* (2004) noted, the number of China's rural residents below the poverty line of US\$1 a day (at 1985 PPP) in 2002 was still 102 million, which was more than one third of the United States of America (USA)'s population, making "Impoverished China" the 10th largest "country" in the world (the other countries with populations exceeding 102 million in 2002 were Bangladesh, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Japan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia, and the USA).

Beginning with the problem of increasing inequality and ethnoregional dimension of poverty which together constitute the epitome as well as the root of China's social ills resulted from her recent decades of continuous, astounding economic *tour de force*, this paper will examine contemporary China's social transformation as a phenomenon that is neither simple nor unidimensional. Like Rose's claim with respect to the institution of government (Rose, 1983: 159), social and in particular sociopolitical change could be said not to be a multiattribute concept, but a *multiconcept* construct. Hence, due attention should be paid to various different dimensions of such changes, both positive and negative, including socioeconomic inequalities, socioracial stratification, ethnoregional disparities and State-civil society relations, in particular the structure-agency interface in the challenge of ACES (active citizenship and effective, accountable State) evolvement (Yeoh, 2010a: 271-272), which will be discussed in detail in the subsequent sections of this paper. At any one time, certain dimensions may increase in severity, while others remain constant or decline. Certain dimensions or variables are considerably more difficult to measure than others but their inclusion is essential to provide a comprehensive view of the challenges of social transformation of China in her contemporary reform era.

## 2. Poverty Reduction and Rising Inequality

One of the most important changes in recent years in China's poverty eradication efforts is the switch of focus from absolute poverty to relative poverty. Even while the overall proportion of population in poverty dropped impressively from 30.7 per cent in 1978 to 3.4 per cent in 2000, according to government statistics, income inequality was increasing, with the Gini coefficient reaching 0.415 in 1995 and continuing to rise (Chai *et al.*, 2004: 2). Hence, while China's reforms have been successful in giving many people higher incomes and producing more goods and services, they also led



to increasingly acute inequality in income and wealth among the populace. From one of the most egalitarian societies in the 1970s, China has turned into one of the most unequal countries in the region and even among developing countries in general. Bert Hoffman of the World Bank noted in 2006 that China's Gini had risen from 0.25 – equal to that of Germany – in 1980 to about 0.45 today, as the country becomes less equal than Russia or the USA. Yan (2010), on the other hand, gave a “conservative” Gini estimate of 0.475 for the year 2007. In the 1980s the richest 10 per cent of the people of China earned 7 times the income of the poorest 10 per cent, today they earn more than 18 times as much.<sup>3</sup> Or as another observer put it, “Ever since the early years of reforms, the divide between the rich and the poor had been emerging, and it is now getting to the stage of ripping the entire society apart.” (Zhou, 2006: 286).

### ***2.1. Income Disparity in Chinese Society***

Computing using disposable income and excluding welfare payments, Huang and Niu (2007) found that China's urban Gini coefficient since 1998 hovered between 0.4 and 0.5, showing a clear tendency towards increasing income inequality. The encouraging sign was that after peaking in 1998, Huang and Niu actually found a slow gradual decline, albeit slight, in Gini from 1998 to 2003 (see Table 1).

Observing that Gini is relatively sensitive only to income changes of the middle-income group while the Theil index is sensitive to changes of the high- and low-income groups, Huang and Niu gave an interesting comparison over the 1999-2003 period of Gini with the Theil index (Table 1) which, reflecting income changes of the high-income group, continued to rise significantly, except for the decline in 2003, while the second Theil index L and the log variance V, which reflect the income changes of the low-income group, experienced continuous slight but steady increase, pointing to the remarkable transformation underway in the income distribution of the high-income and middle-income groups, reflecting the transformation in size and structure of the middle class in China's rapid economic development. The peaking of Gini in 1998 was related to the rapid unbalanced economic growth of that period, while the significant decline of L and V during that period – especially L which was lower than 0.1 for quite long after 1996 – was an indication of the egalitarian tendency of the low-income group: a general widening impoverishment (Huang and Niu, 2007: 156).

However, Yan (2010) gave a high Gini for all China as early as in 1994 at above 0.43, which had risen to a “conservative” estimate of 0.475 in 2007, which is of course a far cry from the Gini of below 0.3 (averages of 0.16 and 0.22 for urban and rural areas respectively) before the economic reforms. This

Table 1 Income Inequality amongst China's Urban Population

Index Year	Gini coefficient (G)	Theil's entropy measure (T)	The second Theil's entropy measure (L)	Log variance index (V)
1985	0.268	0.129	0.116	0.202
1986	0.265	0.131	0.116	0.202
1987	0.264	0.131	0.118	0.204
1988	0.275	0.138	0.124	0.214
1989	0.271	0.143	0.128	0.22
1990	0.272	0.139	0.125	0.215
1991	0.262	0.132	0.119	0.206
1992	0.272	0.16	0.131	0.224
1993	0.297	0.167	0.149	0.252
1994	0.234	0.177	0.158	0.266
1995	0.229	0.17	0.152	0.256
1996	0.449	0.296	0.049	0.253
1997	0.3	0.181	0.161	0.271
1998	0.494	0.081	0.073	0.245
1999	0.487	0.086	0.076	0.246
2000	0.4784	0.091	0.08	0.253
2001	0.476	0.097	0.086	0.263
2002	0.417	0.157	0.113	0.31
2003	0.41	0.133	0.12	0.315

Note: Huang and Niu's computation followed Lambert and Aronson (1993) with data from issues of the *China Statistical Yearbook* of the years 1986-2004, noting that G was sensitive to the income changes of the middle-income class, L and V were sensitive to the income changes of the low-income class, and T was sensitive to the income changes of the high-income class.

Source: Huang and Niu (2007: 157), Table 5-1.

alarmingly high Gini of 0.475 in 2007 represented a growth of 135 per cent from 1978, over a 29-year period in which GDP per capita (at constant prices) had grown by almost 10 times over the pre-reform level with an average annual growth rate of 8.6 per cent. Yan (2010: 176-177) divided this growth of inequality into four phases:

- the "relatively egalitarian" (by international standard) period of 1978-1984 with Gini between 0.2 and 0.3 and little urban-rural disparity, while the rural economy developed immensely under the full force of reform;

- the “relatively justifiable” period of 1985-1992 with Gini hovering between 0.3 and 0.4 while the whole economy was expanding vibrantly with the emphasis of reform shifted to the cities since 1984, though the accompanying inflation and expansion of the income gap had begun to overshoot people’s psychological expectation threshold, resulting in rather serious social instability;
- the worrying period of 1993-2000 of yearly increasing Gini index, with increasingly rapid reform and marketization pushing Gini over the international alarming line of 0.4 in 1993, and further over 0.43 in 1994, before the coefficient dropped back below 0.4 in 1995 and 1996 but rose again with increasing urban-rural, employment, intercommunal and inter-stratum differentiation amidst the intensifying marketization and growth of the private-sector economy following the 15th National Congress of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)<sup>4</sup>;
- the high interest polarization period since 2001 to the present wherein the globalization of China’s growing economy and the wealth effect of the capital market have led to the continuous expansion of the income gap, with Gini reaching 0.475 in 2007, even by “conservative” estimation.

Besides the disparity shown in Table 1 that was based on the individual as unit of analysis, Huang and Niu also computed the disparity index (D), the Ahluwalia index (A) and the Kuznets index (K) with household as unit based on the categorization of the *China Statistical Yearbook* (see Table 2).

Huang and Niu’s indices in Table 2 bring us to the fact that the urban income disparity has been getting more and more noticeable, with the D index showing that the gap between the highest 20 per cent and lowest 20 per cent income groups continued to expand rapidly, from 2.3 times in 1985 to 5.4 times in 2003. On the other hand, the Ahluwalia index (A) shows that the share of the poorest 40 per cent has dropped by 38 per cent over the two decades, from 0.296 in 1985 to 0.185 in 2003, while the Kuznets index (K) indicates that the share of the richest 20 per cent has increased by 25 per cent over the same period, from 0.411 in 1985 to 0.549 in 2003 (*ibid.*: 158-159). Nevertheless, Yan (2010: 177-178) pointed out that China’s rural Gini has always been higher than the urban, implying that the intra-rural income disparity is fueling the expansion of the national income disparity, while the urban-rural income disparity is almost the main cause of the continuous expansion of the national income gap. In fact, the 20 per cent urban highest income group’s income is shown to be 5.5 times the income of the 20 per cent urban lowest income group whereas the 20 per cent rural highest income group’s income is 7.3 times the income of the 20 per cent rural lowest income group.<sup>5</sup> Besides urban-rural, such widening of income and wealth disparity is also manifest in various other aspects (Table 3). Yan’s analysis

shows further that changes in national Gini is positively related to changes in urban-rural income ratio, and concludes that China's present Gini coefficient has reached a stage of too big a disparity and could be even higher if various informal incomes of the middle stratum and upper stratum are included in the calculation, even allowing for some scholars' view that China's Gini could be permitted to be higher, e.g. at 0.45, a line that had almost been reached as early as in 2001.

Table 2 Income Inequality amongst China's Urban Population (Stratified)

Index Year	Disparity index (D)	Ahluwalia index (A)	Kuznets index (K)
1985	2.294	0.296	0.411
1986	2.340	0.293	0.416
1987	2.322	0.294	0.416
1988	2.422	0.288	0.423
1989	2.489	0.284	0.428
1990	2.451	0.286	0.424
1991	2.332	0.294	0.418
1992	2.535	0.281	0.430
1993	2.771	0.268	0.451
1994	2.981	0.258	0.457
1995	2.878	0.263	0.451
1996	2.869	0.263	0.451
1997	3.120	0.252	0.462
1998	3.246	0.246	0.468
1999	3.378	0.241	0.475
2000	3.610	0.232	0.483
2001	3.817	0.225	0.494
2002	5.151	0.190	0.539
2003	5.388	0.185	0.549

D – Ratio of the income share of the highest-income 20 per cent of the population to the income share of the lowest-income 20 per cent of the population

A – Income share of the lowest-income 40 per cent of the population, with maximum value = 0.4

K – Income share of the highest-income 20 per cent of the population, with minimum value = 0.2

Source: Huang and Niu (2007: 62-63, 158), Table 5-2.

Table 3 China's Income and Wealth Disparity: Results of Various Surveys and Estimations

Data source	Item	Highest income/ greatest wealth	Lowest income/ least wealth	Note
Chinese Academy of Social Sciences	Proportion of wealth in family wealth per capita	Highest 20% residents having 72.41%	Lowest 20% residents having 1.35%	Gini coefficient = 0.6865
	Proportion of residential house estate in family wealth per capita	Eastern region: 81.4% Non-agricultural households: 80.7% Urban households: 82.0%	Western region: 66.5% Agricultural households: 69.6% Rural households: 72.1%	Sample volume = 5118
China's Renmin (People's) Bank	Proportion of household average saving deposits in urban renminbi deposits	Largest (household average) 20% households having 64.4%	Smallest (household average) 20% households having 1.3%	Local currency deposits: differential = 49.5
	Proportion of household average saving deposits in urban foreign currency deposits	Largest 20% households having 88.1%	Smallest 20% households having 0.3%	Foreign currency deposits: differential = 293.7
National Bureau of Statistics	Urban-rural income ratio	About 40% of urban residents getting near 70%	About 60% of rural residents getting near 30%	Income differential = 2.33 times
	High-low income groups' income ratio	20% high-income group getting 40% income	80% middle- and lower-income group getting 60% income	Income proportion of high-income group getting larger

Source: Yan (2010: 180), Table 4-1.

Table 4 China: Ranking of Ten Major Social Strata by Average Monthly Income

Stratum	Period	Before 1971	1971-80	1981-90	1991-99	2000-01	2005	Overall ranking	Overall ranking of last four periods
State and social administrative stratum (2.1%)		1	1	4	3	3	4	3	3
Managerial stratum (1.6%)		3	2	3	4	2	2	2	2
Private enterprise owner stratum (1.0%)		–	–	1	1	1	1	1	1
Professional skilled stratum (4.6%)		2	3	6	5	4	5	4	5
Officer stratum (7.2%)		6	7	8	6	6	3	7	6
Individually-owned business & industry ( <i>getihu</i> ) stratum (7.1%)		7	6	2	2	5	6	5	4
Commercial- and service-sector personnel stratum (11.2%)		4	4	5	7	7	8	6	7
Worker stratum (17.5%)		5	5	7	8	8	7	8	8
Agricultural labourer stratum (42.9%)		8	8	10	10	10	10	10	10
Urban and rural vagrant, unemployed and semi-unemployed stratum (4.8%)		9	9	9	9	9	9	9	9

Source: Yan (2010: 186), Table 4-4; stratum's present proportion in brackets from Li and Chen (2004: 13), Figure 1-3.

Table 5 China: Average Monthly Income of Ten Major Social Strata and Differential

	Before 1971	1971-80	1981-90	1991-99	2000-01	2005
Mean value of the strata's average monthly incomes	42.0	52.8	145.3	465.3	641.1	754.4
Income differential between highest and lowest stratum	2.7	3.8	13.8	21.7	19.4	19.9

Source: Yan (2010: 179), Figure 4-3.

In terms of income ranking, the social stratum that is rising fastest since the beginning of the “reform and open” policy is that of the private entrepreneurs, followed by managers, State and social administrators, skilled professionals, and business and industry *getihu* 个体户<sup>6</sup> (Table 4). The inter-stratum income gap has indeed been expanding with the differential between the highest average monthly income stratum (that of the State and social administrators up to 1980 and that of the private enterprise owners after 1980) and lowest income stratum (always been that of the agricultural labourers) spiraling from 3.8:1 during the 1971-1980 period (52.8 yuan) to 19.9:1 by 2005 (754.4 yuan) (Table 5).

Huang and Niu's analysis also found that, in 2003, provinces/zizhiqu/zhixiashi<sup>7</sup> whose Gini coefficients ( $G_i$ ) are lower than the national figure ( $G$ ) of 0.45 totaled 20 (Table 6).

The poor zizhiqu of Tibet was rather egalitarian, with Gini lower than 0.3. Other provinces/zhixiashi with a reasonable level of 0.3-0.4 were Shandong, Jiangxi, Hubei, Guizhou and Chongqing. The majority of provinces/zizhiqu/zhixiashi, totaled 23, had Gini levels between 0.4 and 0.5, showing the inclination towards widening gap between rich and poor. Two provinces, the economically advanced Jiangsu and Zhejiang, had Gini greater than 0.5 (*ibid.*: 162).

At his first press conference in 2003 as China's premier, Wen Jiabao summarized the coming headaches in his new post in a group of figures, including China's labour force of 740 million *vis-à-vis* the Western advanced countries' total of just 430 million, and China's annual additional labour force of 10 million, *xiagang* 下岗 and unemployed figure of about 14 million, and the rural-to-urban migrant labour of about 120 million – all giving rise to the huge employment pressure the country was facing (Liu, 2010). In

Table 6 Comparison of China's Provincial Gini ( $G_i$ ) and National Gini ( $G$ )\*, 2003

$G_i < G$	$G_i \geq G$ (higher by)
<i>Eastern Region</i>	
Beijing 北京 zhixiashi	Fujian 福建 (1%-10%)
Hebei 河北	Guangdong 广东 (1%-10%)
Shandong 山东	Hainan 海南 (1%-10%)
Shanghai 上海 zhixiashi	Jiangsu 江苏 (10%-15%)
Tianjin 天津 zhixiashi	Liaoning 辽宁 (1%-10%)
	Zhejiang 浙江 (15%-29%)
<i>Central Region</i>	
Heilongjiang 黑龙江	Anhui 安徽 (1%-10%)
Henan 河南	Jilin 吉林 (1%-10%)
Hubei 湖北	
Hunan 湖南	
Jiangxi 江西	
Shanxi 山西	
<i>Western Region</i>	
Chongqing 重庆 zhixiashi	Ningxia 宁夏 Hui zizhiqu (10%-15%)
Gansu 甘肃	Qinghai 青海 (1%-10%)
Guangxi 广西 Zhuang zizhiqu	Sichuan 四川 (1%-10%)
Guizhou 贵州	
Inner Mongolia / Nei Monggol 内蒙古 Mongol zizhiqu	
Shaanxi 陕西	
Tibet / Xizang 西藏 Tibetan zizhiqu	
Xinjiang 新疆 Uygur zizhiqu	
Yunnan 云南	

\*  $G = 0.45$ *zizhiqu* 自治区 – “autonomous region”*zhixiashi* 直辖市 – municipality directly ruled by the central government

Source: Huang and Niu (2007: 161-162), Table 5-3(2).

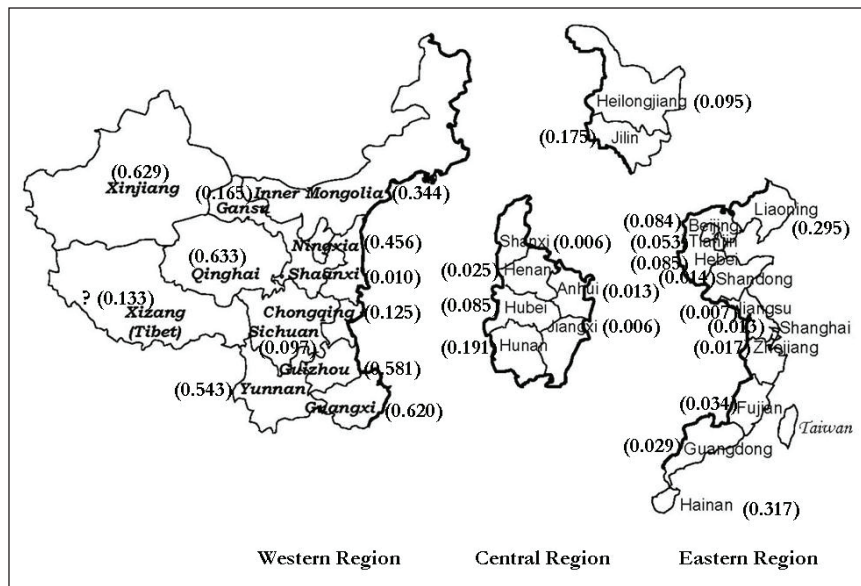


terms of poverty and stratification, Wen pointed out that there were 900 million peasants among the country's total population of 1.3 billion, with about 30 million still being trapped in poverty – and the latter figure was derived based on annual income per capita of 625 yuan<sup>8</sup> which was in fact too low a poverty line: if the line were to be more accurately placed at 825 yuan, the rural poverty population would be about 900 million. In terms of interregional disparity, Wen pointed out that the GDP of the 5 or 6 provinces in eastern, coastal China had exceeded 50 per cent of the national total GDP (*ibid.*).

## 2.2. Ethnoregional Dimension of Poverty

In line with the now well-known fear of instability (*luan* 亂) on the part of China's ruling Communist Party, the main objective of the country's poverty alleviation policy is to prevent income and wealth inequality from growing out of political control, by attempting to improve the economic position

Figure 1 China: Ethnic Diversity by Province/Zizhiqu/Zhixiashi



Note: For the computation of the ethnic diversity/fractionalization index (EFI), with a range of 0–1 from hypothetically complete homogeneity to hypothetically perfect diversity, see Yeoh (2003: 28). EFI for China as a whole is only 0.125, indicating high homogeneity (*ibid.*: 30–32, Table 1).

Source: Computed with data from the 2000 population census.

of the poorest through considerably limited administrative intervention. Furthermore, discontent brewing in the areas resided by ethnic minorities<sup>9</sup> is taken seriously because these areas are also places that show a relative concentration of poor people.

Just how the western region populated by the non-Han peoples<sup>10</sup> has been left behind in China's economic development is clearly indicated by the poverty problem. Any political or social instability in this ethnic minority region could have grave ramifications throughout the economy that would threaten the development efforts of the central government especially in regard to the development of the regional cores. The *Green Book of China's Rural Economy 2008-2009* gave the rural Gini coefficients (year 2007) of 0.3, 0.3 and 0.4 respectively for the western, central and eastern region (Sheng and Bo, 2009: 131, Table 10-2). Related to this, the *China Development Report 2007* that specially focused on poverty elimination gave the regional distribution of rural absolute poverty as shown in Table 7 and Table 8.

Table 7 shows that of the 23.65 million rural poor of China in 2005, the eastern region, central region and western region contributed 3.24 million (13.7 per cent), 8.39 million (35.5 per cent) and 12.03 million (50.8 per cent) respectively, with incidence of absolute poverty of the central region and western region being respectively 3.1 times and 6.5 times that of the eastern region. Compare this with the 1993 figures of 19.5 per cent, 31.1 per cent and 49.4 per cent for the eastern region, central region and western region respectively (*Zhongguo Fazhan Baogao 2007*, p. 37), it is obvious that the changes in the regional distribution of the rural population in absolute poverty were mainly reflected in the decline of its proportion in the eastern region, increase of that in the central region, while that in the western region had remained largely unchanged, with the implication that the extent of decline of the number in absolute poverty in the eastern region actually surpassed the national average, that in the central region was obviously below the national average, and that in the western region was the same as the national average (*ibid.*).

Table 8 shows the interregional differentials in rural poverty incidence. Those provinces/zizhiqu with incidence of poverty above 5 per cent (i.e. double the national average) in 2005 were Inner Mongolia, Guizhou, Yunnan, Tibet, Shaanxi, Gansu, Qinghai and Xinjiang which were all in the western region. The only province/zizhiqu/zhixiashi of the western region that had incidence of poverty below 5 per cent were Chongqing, Guangxi, Sichuan and Ningxia – the last one, Ningxia, having experienced a steep decline in rural incidence of poverty from a height of 14.5 per cent in 2000 to just 3 per cent by 2005. Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Fujian and Guangdong which are all provinces/zhixiashi in the eastern region have basically eliminated absolute poverty, with incidence of poverty at just 0.2

Table 7 China's Rural Absolute Poverty: Regional Distribution and Change, 1998-2005

	1998	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	Decline during 1998-2005	Rate of decline during 1998-2005 (%)
Poverty population (million people)									
CHINA	42.10	32.09	29.27	28.20	29.00	26.10	23.65	-18.45	43.8
Eastern	6.22	4.87	3.93	4.65	4.48	3.74	3.24	-2.98	47.9
Central	15.59	10.91	9.96	8.88	10.30	9.31	8.39	-7.20	46.2
Western	20.30	16.32	15.37	14.68	14.22	13.05	12.03	-8.27	40.7
Incidence of poverty (%)									
CHINA	4.6	3.5	3.2	3.0	3.1	2.8	2.5	-2.1	45.7
Eastern	1.7	1.3	1.0	1.2	1.2	1.0	0.8	-0.9	52.9
Central	4.8	3.4	3.1	2.7	3.2	2.8	2.5	-2.3	47.9
Western	9.1	7.3	6.8	6.5	6.2	5.7	5.2	-3.9	42.9
Proportion of rural poor (%)									
Eastern	14.8	15.2	13.4	16.5	15.4	14.3	13.7	-1.1	7.4
Central	37.0	34.0	34.0	31.5	35.5	35.7	35.5	-1.5	4.1
Western	48.2	50.8	52.5	52.0	49.0	50.0	50.8	2.6	-5.4

Source: Zhongguo Fazhan Baogao 2007, p. 38, Table 2.2.

Table 8 Incidence of Absolute Poverty of the Provinces/Zizhiqu/Zhixiashi, 1998-2005 (%)

Year	1998	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
CHINA	4.6	3.5	3.2	3.0	3.1	2.8	2.5
<b><i>Eastern</i></b>							
Beijing	1.6	0.6	0.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Fujian	0.7	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.1
Guangdong	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
Hainan	2.7	1.9	1.7	3.0	2.1	1.9	2.2
Hebei	2.0	1.9	1.8	2.9	2.3	1.9	1.5
Jiangsu	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.2
Liaoning	3.1	3.5	3.2	3.2	3.6	2.5	2.2
Shandong	1.4	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.3	0.3
Shanghai	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Tianjin	0.5	0.9	0.5	0.2	0.7	0.2	0.0
Zhejiang	1.0	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.2
<b><i>Central</i></b>							
Anhui	3.2	2.5	1.8	2.0	3.3	2.7	2.4
Heilongjiang	8.2	5.6	4.6	3.4	5.6	3.6	3.2
Henan	4.0	3.0	2.1	1.7	2.4	2.1	1.9
Hubei	4.4	2.2	1.8	2.0	1.8	3.3	3.1
Hunan	5.0	2.3	2.1	1.9	2.1	1.9	1.8
Jiangxi	6.5	2.8	2.8	3.4	3.6	3.8	3.5
Jilin	4.2	4.1	3.1	2.6	3.0	2.0	1.5
Shanxi	6.0	6.8	6.6	5.0	3.9	3.1	2.3
<b><i>Western</i></b>							
Chongqing	6.6	4.2	4.0	3.0	3.0	2.2	1.6
Gansu	11.5	9.7	9.6	9.2	8.6	8.4	8.1
Guangxi	5.5	5.0	3.4	2.7	3.6	3.5	3.2
Guizhou	12.9	10.8	10.4	10.7	10.1	9.7	9.0
Nei Monggol	6.4	8.2	13.3	9.8	9.4	7.5	6.6
Ningxia	12.6	14.5	13.6	8.9	8.4	3.8	3.0
Qinghai	14.0	18.6	16.9	16.1	15.6	13.6	11.5
Shaanxi	9.0	7.9	7.8	6.2	8.3	7.8	7.2
Sichuan	5.5	3.7	3.3	2.2	2.5	2.2	2.0
Xizang (Tibet)	19.0	19.8	15.2	15.6	14.0	8.8	7.2
Xinjiang	8.9	10.0	6.5	6.9	5.7	5.7	5.1
Yunnan	12.2	8.2	7.9	11.1	7.9	7.5	7.0

Source: *Zhongguo Fazhan Baogao 2007*, p. 39, Table 2.3.

per cent and below in 2005. Shandong also had incidence of poverty below 1 per cent. Hainan, Hebei and Liaoning were the only provinces in the eastern region that still had incidence of poverty above 1 per cent in 2005. On the other hand, all provinces in the central region – Anhui, Heilongjiang, Henan, Hubei, Hunan, Jiangxi, Jilin and Shanxi – had rural absolute poverty incidence from 1.5 to 3.5 per cent in 2005.

There are four characteristics typical of the distribution of poverty population in China:

1. Concentration in the mountainous areas.
2. Concentration in the western region.
3. Concentration in environmentally fragile areas.
4. Concentration in ethnic minority areas.

For instance, out of the 29 million people in absolute poverty in 2003, 15.5 per cent were in the eastern region, 35.5 per cent in the central region, and 49 per cent in the western region. Areas with incidence of poverty less than 1 per cent were all located in the eastern region. Guangxi, Sichuan and Chongqing were the only places in the western region with incidence of poverty between 1 and 5 per cent. Inner Mongolia, Yunnan, Shaanxi, Gansu, Ningxia and Xinjiang were places in the western region with incidence of poverty between 5 and 10 per cent. All areas with incidence of poverty above 10 per cent were in the western region, viz. Guizhou, Tibet and Qinghai. Rural population with income from 637 to 882 yuan per annum are officially classified as the low-income group. In 2003, those in the low-income group totaled 29.46 million just within the poverty counties alone. (Chen, 2006: 175, footnote 1) Combining the rural poverty population and the low-income group, the number in 2003 totaled 85.17 million, of which 40.14 million (47.1 per cent) were in the western region, 31.2 million (36.6 per cent) in the central region and 13.83 million (16.2 per cent) in the eastern region. (*ibid.*: 176, Figure 7-2)

In 2000, of the 592 officially designated poverty counties<sup>11</sup> – including 257 ethnic minority poverty counties – 62 per cent were concentrated in the western region. Of the 32.09 million poor in 2000, more than half were among the ethnic minorities (i.e. non-Han) or in the ethnic minority areas, totaling 17 million people. Not much had changed in the subsequent years. For instance, out of the national figure of 29 million people in poverty in 2003, 16.98 million or 58.55 per cent were in the 12 *zizhiqu* and provinces of the western region. (*Zhongguo Minzu Fazhan Baogao, 2001-2006*, p. 235) Hence, it is discernable that there is a trend of gradual concentration of the poor towards the western region and the frontier areas, and towards the ethnic minorities. Estimation of the extent of absolute poverty among the ethnic minorities ranges from 40 per cent of the total population as estimated by researchers

in China to 60 per cent as estimated by Nicholas Stern of the World Bank. In view of the fact that ethnic minorities only constitute 8.41 per cent of China's total population, that 40 to 60 per cent of China's poor come from them is indeed alarming. (*ibid.*)

One of the most crucial aspects of China's poverty problem hence is the very fact that the dominant component of the rural poor is the ethnic minorities – as mentioned above, out of the 592 poverty counties, 257 (44 per cent) are ethnic minority counties. Among the poor of the 592 poverty counties in 2003, 46.7 per cent were in ethnic minority areas, with incidence of poverty of 11.4 per cent that was higher than those of the mountainous areas (10.1 per cent), hilly areas (7.1 per cent), old revolutionary base areas (7.7 per cent) and the plains (7.8 per cent). Eighty per cent of the 4.59 million poor of Guizhou were ethnic minorities, and almost all of the 3.1 million hard-core poor of the province were ethnic minorities. In the mountainous areas of southern Ningxia, 60 per cent of the 520 thousand poor were Hui. Eighty-five per cent of Yunnan's 4.4 million poor and more than 90 per cent of Tibet's 250 thousand poor were also ethnic minorities. (Chen, 2006: 177) In fact, out of the country's 29 million poverty population, 45 per cent or more than 13 million were in the ethnic minority areas. Among the 630 thousand people of 22 ethnic minority groups each with population less than 100 thousand, 394 thousand were in absolute poverty or in the low-income category. (Wu, 2006: 15)

Ethnic minority areas' rural absolute-poverty population constituted 47.7 per cent of the national total, according to official figures (end of 2004), while the incidence of poverty was 5 percentage points higher than the national figure, population with low income constituted 46 per cent of the national total, proportion of low-income population in rural population was 9 percentage points higher than the national figure, absolute-poverty population plus low-income population constituted 46.6 per cent of the national total, and the proportion of absolute-poverty plus low-income population in rural population was 14 percentage points higher than the national figure. Almost 80 per cent of China's ethnic minorities are found in the country's western region, especially the rural areas. China's northwest with about 20 different ethnic minorities and total minority population of more than 15 million and southwest with more than 30 ethnic minorities and total minority population of more than 29 million being the country's two areas with the most complex ethnic composition and the largest number of and most concentrated ethnic minorities, the geographical correlation of ethnic minority distribution (largely populating the frontier areas) and poverty population distribution is unmistakable, hence reflecting the composite phenomenon made up of rural poverty, geographical poverty, ethnic poverty and frontier poverty. (Nie and Yang, 2006: 153)

According to the *Green Book of China's Rural Economy 2008-2009*, the western region's rural disposal income per capita was 2,281 yuan (year 2007), compared to 3,054 yuan of the central region and 4,375 yuan of the eastern region (Sheng and Bo, 2009: 131, Table 10-2). As China is experiencing a continuous expansion in urban-rural income gap, such interregional rural income disparity has in fact been widening since economic reform began, as can be observed in Table 9. The ratio of eastern to central to western rural income has been expanding from 1:0.83:0.79 in 1980 to 1:0.75:0.63 by 1990 and further to 1:0.68:0.52 by 2005. An example of such widening gap is the regional GDP per capita differential between Zhejiang Province (in the eastern region) and Guizhou Province (in the western region), with the former's 37,411 yuan *versus* the latter's meager 6,915 yuan (year 2007), as highlighted in the *2010 Blue Book of China's Society* (Yang and Chi, 2009: 239) – Guizhou's figure being just 18.48 per cent of Zhejiang's.

According to official figures shown in Table 10, western regional to national GDP ratio appears to be stable, with slight increases in later years, and there was steady increase in western regional GDP per capita, though it still lagged behind the national level by a very large differential. Even official figures admitted that the gap between the ethnic regions and the advanced eastern region was expanding, with Shanghai's and Guangdong's respective annual average growth rates of 13.11 per cent and 13.97 per cent for the 2000-2004 period exceeding the 13.05 per cent of the ethnic regions, and the annual average growth rate of Guangdong's total import-export surpassing that of the ethnic regions by 9 percentage points for the same period (*Zhongguo Minzu Fazhan Baogao (2001-2006)*, p. 64). The disadvantage of the western region is even more glaring in terms of public revenue, where the differential has been expanding over the years.

Table 9 China's Rural Annual Average Net Income per Capita by Region (yuan)

Region \ Year	Eastern	Central	Western
1980	217.6	181.0	171.6
1985	452.2	377.8	313.4
1990	847.6	632.9	533.8
1995	2127.2	1402.7	1060.7
2000	3063.3	2077.1	1592.7
2005	4416.6	2999.5	2300.4

Source: *Dangdai Zhongguo Shehui Ge Jiecheng Fenxi* 2007, p. 212, Table 7-2 (data from *Zhongguo Nongcun Zhuhu Diaocha Nianjian* 2006, pp. 72-82).

Table 10 GDP and GDP per Capita of China's Western Region

	Year Unit	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2008*
GDP of the western region	billion yuan	1464.7	1535.4	1665.5	1824.8	1988.6	2295.4	2758.5	5826.0
National GDP	billion yuan	8278.0	8206.75	8946.81	9731.48	10517.23	11739.02	13687.59	32722.3
GDP of the western region as percentage of national GDP	%	17.7	19.0	18.9	19.0	19.1	19.7	20.1	17.8
GDP per capita of the western region	yuan	4123	4302	4667	5070	5438	6306	7728	13186
National GDP per capita	yuan	6715	6551	7086	7651	8214	9101	10561	21215
GDP per capita of the western region as percentage of national GDP per capita	%	61.40	65.67	65.86	66.26	66.20	69.28	73.2	62.15

Note: \* GDP per capita figures are for year 2007.

Sources: *Zhongguo Xibu Nongcun Quanmian Xiaokang Zhibiao Tixi Yanjiu*, 2006, pp. 51-52, Tables 4-1, 4-2; *Zhongguo Xibu Jingji Fazhan Baogao (2009)*, p. 22, Table 6.



### 3. Environmental Degradation, Ethnoregionalization of Poverty and Social Instability

And when you look long into an abyss, the abyss also looks into you.

– Friedrich Nietzsche (1886), *Beyond Good and Evil*<sup>12</sup>

As poverty and inequality constitute one of the most, if not *the* most, critical challenges China faces in her next phase of politico-socioeconomic development, and as has been noted earlier, poverty in China has the properties of being concentrated in the western region and in the ethnic minority areas, ethnoregionalization of poverty inevitably ensues, presenting China not only with economic challenges but also long-term sociopolitical security risks. Public protests in the ethnic “autonomous regions” lately have been growing alarmingly. For instance, over a thousand ethnic Mongolian herdsmen demonstrated in mid-July 2011 against alleged government-business collusion in an ethnic Han Chinese businessman’s low-price purchase of over ten thousand *mu*<sup>13</sup> of grazing land, according to the New York-based Southern Mongolian Human Rights Information Center.<sup>14</sup> The subsequent development of the purchased land had allegedly brought in hundreds of ethnic Han workers with trucks and bulldozers whose brutal intrusion into the ethnic Mongolian village concerned had resulted in the death and injury of over a hundred livestock and the injury of over 20 herdsmen who were trying to defend their rights. Another 20 more herdsmen were injured in the thousand-strong demonstrators’ clash with the police in mid-July.<sup>15</sup> This, in fact, is not the first such incident in 2011. Earlier, on 25th May, over two thousand ethnic Mongolian students and herdsmen demonstrated in front of the government building in Xilinhot (Siliyinqota) following the death of a herdsman after being hit by coal truck on 10th May while protecting his grazing land against destruction by ethnic Han’s economic development drive that has caused increasingly acute resentment among ethnic Mongolians who see themselves as the oppressed people of Inner Mongolia, devoid of political power and falling prey to the insatiable rapacity of the Han Chinese migrants – an extension of the dominant central Han political power of the country – who are destroying their traditional economy, culture and environment. Also, in May, demonstrations erupted in the regional capital Hohhot (Kökeqota) ending with the arrest of 50 students and other citizens, and according the Southern Mongolian Information Center, by early June at least 90 students, herdsmen and other citizens had been arrested in Inner Mongolia’s demonstrations, with many students seriously injured in their clash with the police. The herdsman’s death was not an isolated case in Inner Mongolia. There was another case occurring also around that time that involved the death of an ethnic minority young man being hit by an excavator

Table 11 "Mass Incidents" in Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang: Comparison and Contrast

	Inner Mongolia, 11th May 2011	Xinjiang, 5th July 2009
Trigger	Rights-defending herdsman killed by coal truck	Uighur workers killed by Han Chinese
Background	Herdsmen's livelihood in great difficulty and poverty blamed on mining activity on their grassland	Poor development in Uighur areas leading to acute poverty
Way of protest	Peaceful demonstrations	Violent Uighur backlash killing Han Chinese
Slogan of protest	"Remembrance of the killed! Stop mining!"	"Blood for blood! Han Chinese get the hell out of Xinjiang!"
Participants	Mongolian students and herdsmen	Uighur youths
State response	Suppression with army and riot police; making arrests before situation worsened	Suppression with army and riot police; making arrests after conflict

in a fight with the miners over issues related to environmental pollution due to mining activities.<sup>16</sup>

The Inner Mongolia troubles came at a time when tensions were high due to the approaching anniversary of the June Fourth 1989 Beijing massacre, and when this multiethnic nation<sup>17</sup> is still reeling from the shock of the 14th March 2008 Lhasa riots and the 5th July 2009 Xinjiang ethnic conflict. There are indeed many similarities between the new incident in Inner Mongolia and the 2009 ethnic violence in Xinjiang, as shown in Table 11.<sup>18</sup>

While the Inner Mongolia trouble is more recent in origin and less volatile as compared to the long-running troubles in Tibet and Xinjiang, Beijing's central government has not been any softer in its suppression of the slightest sign of organized dissent that it perceives as equivalent or a prelude to separatism. The most high-profile case of such suppression is the 15-year jail sentence meted out to ethnic Mongolian dissident scholar Hada who founded the Southern Mongolian Democratic League in 1992 pursuing high autonomy for "Southern Mongolia" (i.e. China's Inner Mongolia) and possible referendum for the unification of Inner Mongolia and Outer Mongolia (i.e. the Republic of Mongolia). He was sentenced in 1996 for subversion, separatism and espionage, and had since disappeared after his release in December 2010.

What the Beijing central government might find perplexing is the fact that since 2002 Inner Mongolia has been China's number one province/zizhiqu ("autonomous region") in terms of GDP growth rate, with a GDP of 972.5 billion yuan in 2009, mainly from mining, which also gave the prefecture-level city of Ordos a high GDP per capita of US\$15,000.<sup>19</sup> While the rich deposits of Inner Mongolia's minerals such as coal, rare earth, Glauber's salt, trona, etc. have indeed brought wealth to the region, excessive mining has been accused by the locals as the main reason for the deterioration of grassland (receding grassland) for which the official media has also blamed on the herdsmen's over-grazing their livestock. Of Inner Mongolia's over 63.59 million hectares of useable grassland, as large as 38.67 hectares, i.e. 60 per cent, has deteriorated. Horrific pollution and scarred landscape of the Inner Mongolian grassland environment have been caused by excessive mining due to recent years' rapidly rising coal price which have attracted a huge influx of Han Chinese into this largest coal mining region of China, which is viewed by civil rights groups as tantamount to genocide of the Mongolian herdsmen whose life is so closely intertwined with the grassland for hundreds of years till today.<sup>20</sup> The peaceful and harmonious society and interethnic relationship, *vis-à-vis* Tibet and Xinjiang, in this top-growth "autonomous region", have been proven to be a façade hiding the simmering, suppressed anger of the ethnic Mongolians against the State-capital collusion in exploiting and destroying their landscape and life for the benefit of Han Chinese migrants and the Han Chinese-dominated central Party-State. Furthermore, the atrocities committed by the Maoist State during the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s, when hundreds of thousands of people were accused, through torture, to be members of the spurious seditious "People's Revolutionary Party of Inner Mongolia"<sup>21</sup>, resulting in the death of tens of thousands of persecuted ethnic Mongolians, have also been a ghost haunting Beijing's rule over Inner Mongolia to date, similar to the other volatile ethnic regions of Xinjiang and Tibet, that the cosmetic rehabilitations after the passing of the Maoist era and overall GDP growth have not been able to exorcize.

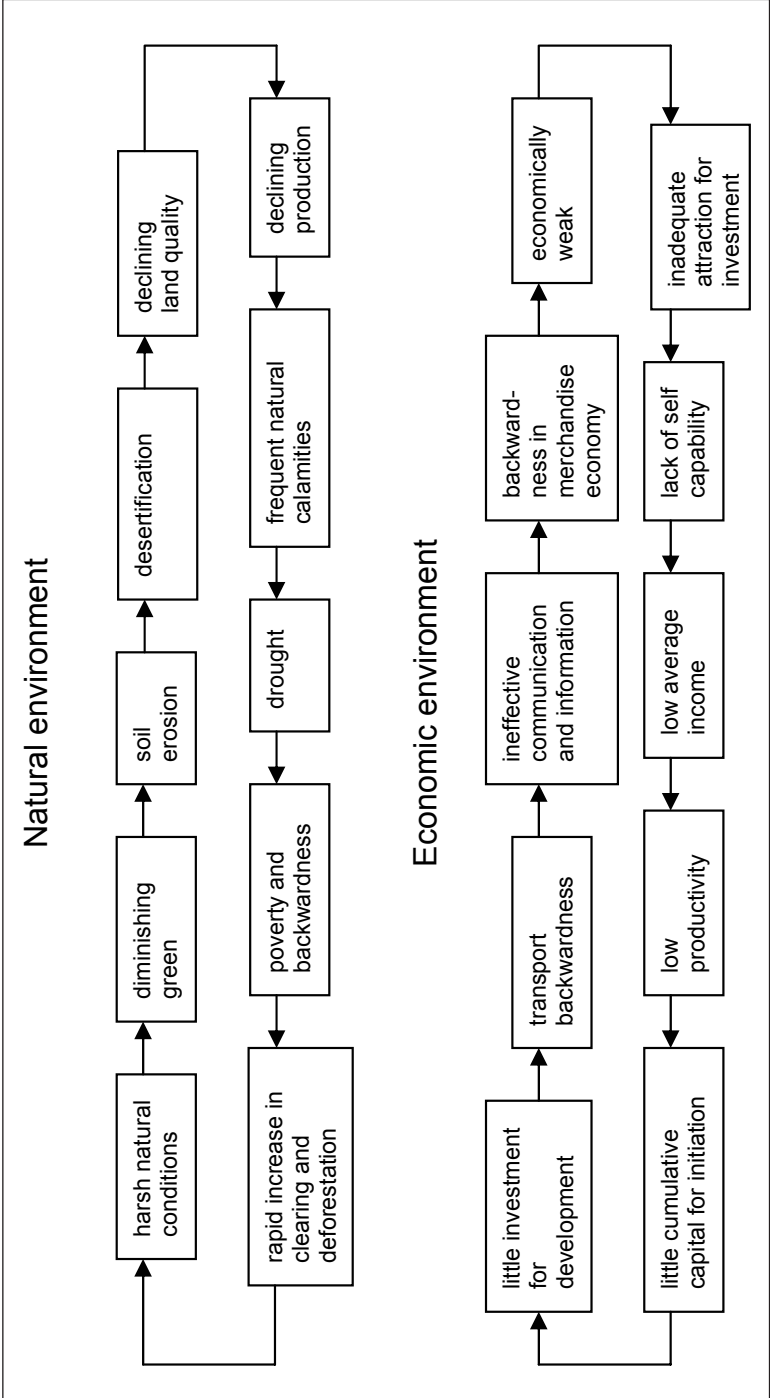
It is also crucial to take into consideration that for China as a whole, poverty is still very much related to ecological factors. For instance, the concentration of the poor in the western region which includes, among others, Inner Mongolia and the other ethnic "autonomous regions" like Xinjiang, Tibet, Ningxia and Guangxi, is related to the fact that, besides desertification, the poverty-stricken mountainous areas are concentrated in this particular region. The country's 64.8 per cent of poverty-stricken mountainous areas (*shanqu* 山区) and 56.2 per cent of the hilly (*qiuling* 丘陵) areas are found in 10 provinces/zizhiqu/zhixiashi of the western region, occupying 72.9 per cent of the total area of the region, with mountainous areas alone taking up 53.1

per cent. The most mountainous provinces are the three southwest provinces of Sichuan (including Chongqing), Yunnan and Guizhou, with mountainous areas taking up 72 per cent, 80.3 per cent and 80.8 per cent of the respective total areas of the said provinces. If inclusive of the hilly areas, the figure rises to 95 per cent for Yunnan and Guizhou, and 97.5 per cent for Sichuan.<sup>22</sup> (Chen, 2006: 176; original source: *Zhongguo Shanqu Fazhan Baogao 2003*, pp. 246-247) Out of the 592 poverty counties, 366 are in the western region, and out of these 366 counties, 258 are in remote mountain counties, occupying about 70 per cent of the western mountain counties. Most of these poverty counties are distributed over 6 major areas of fragile ecology, viz. Inner Mongolian plateau's southeastern border area that suffers from desertification, Huangtu 黄土 plateau's gully area that suffers from severe soil erosion, the environmentally deteriorating mountainous areas of the Qin Ba 秦巴 region, the ecologically endangered hilly areas of the karst plateau, the sealed-off mountain and valley areas of the Hengduan 横断 range and the severely cold mountain areas of the western deserts. Being ecologically fragile and sensitive, all these are areas extremely short of resources, with extremely bad environment for human habitation. (*ibid.*: 177) Thus, coupled with structural economic disadvantages, the western region populated by many of China's ethnic minorities is trapped in the vicious cycles of developmental nightmare as depicted by Wu (2006) (see Figure 2).

There are three main issues in the western region's environmental degradation: soil erosion, desertification and grassland deterioration. Major symptoms like the increasingly serious Huanghe 黄河 (Yellow River) drought since the 1990s, the severe flood of mid-Yangzi River (Chang Jiang) 扬子江/长江 in 1998, and the almost yearly spring sandstorm since 2000 all point to the critical stage of environmental degradation of the western region. Take the typical example of year 2008. The first sandstorm came in March from the Gobi desert, affecting not only up to 110 million people in China's 300 cities, towns and counties in 5 provinces/zizhiqu, but also adjacent nations including Korea, Japan and Taiwan, straining bilateral relations. Such sandstorms from China are costing, besides human lives, an estimated US\$5.82 billion of losses in Korea alone.<sup>23</sup>

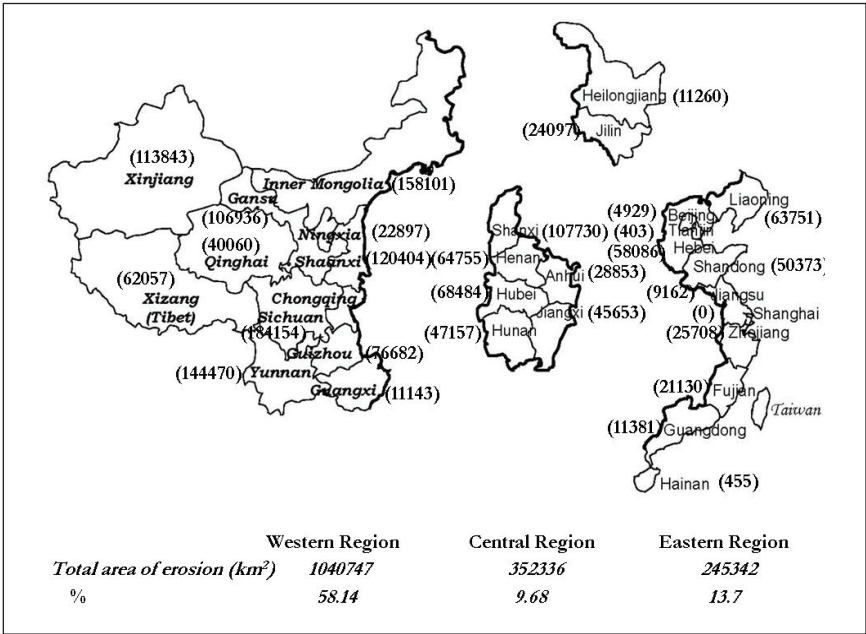
Up to 80 per cent of the country's total area of soil erosion, 81.43 per cent of the area of desertification and 93.27 per cent of the area of grassland deterioration are in the western region. (*ibid.*: 19; original source: *Zhongguo Quyu Fazhan Baogao 2000*) As shown in Figure 3, of all the provinces/zizhiqu/zhixiashi (not including Chongqing), seven have areas of soil erosion exceeding 100,000 square kilometres. Other than Shanxi, all of these provinces/zizhiqu are in the western region: Sichuan, Inner Mongolia, Shaanxi, Xinjiang and Gansu. Soil erosion in the southwestern region is also serious (see Table 12).

Figure 2 Vicious Cycles of China's Ethnic Minority Areas



Source: Wu (2006: 2), Figures 2 and 3.

Figure 3 China: Area of Soil Erosion (km<sup>2</sup>) by Province/Zizhiqu/Zhixiashi



Source: Chen (2006: 19), Table 1-3 (data from *Zhongguo Shengtai Puhui Xianzhuang Baogao*, June 1997).

Table 12 China: Soil Erosion in the Southwest

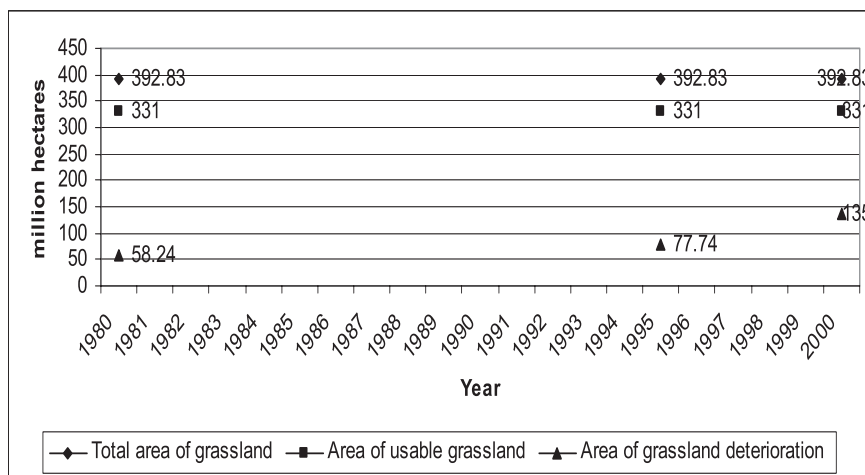
	Yunnan	Guizhou	Sichuan	Chongqing	TOTAL
Area of soil erosion (’0000 km <sup>2</sup> )	14.69	7.4	22.0	4.35	48.44
% of total area of province/zhixiashi	38.3	42.0	45.0	52.8	42.8
Volume of soil erosion (hundred million tons per annum)	5.5	2.7	6.0	2.0	16.2

Source: Chen (2006: 20), Table 1-4 (data from *Zhongguo Quyu Fazhan Baogao* 2000, p. 207).

The desertification of farmland in the western region involves a total area of up to 1.1 million hectares. While this is only 2.24 per cent of the total area of farmland in the western region, it contributes to 43.24 per cent of the national total area of desertification of farmland – that suffering from light- and medium-degree desertification is 87.95 per cent of the national total area and that suffering from high-degree desertification is 12.05 per cent of the national total area. Provinces/zizhiqu in the western region particularly severely hit by desertification are Xinjiang, Qinghai, Gansu and Tibet. (Chen, 2006: 20) With the “Western Regional Development” (*xibu dakaifa* 西部大开发) strategy inevitably aiming at exploiting the rich natural resources (water, nonferrous metal, petroleum, natural gas, etc.) of the western region, both to promote the region’s economic growth and enhance the living standard and welfare of the region’s inhabitants, and to meet the energy needs of the country as a whole, in time there could arise an inherent contradiction between ecological construction/environmental protection and the basic aim of *xibu dakaifa* that cannot be ignored. (*ibid.*: 33)

With 40 million hectares of grassland (41.7 per cent of the country’s total land area), China is one of the few countries in the world with the largest grassland. The country’s natural grassland is mainly distributed in the ethnic minority pastures in the western and northern frontiers. The area of pasturage totaled up to 3.6 million square kilometres, or 37 per cent of the country’s land area. However, the western region is also the country’s main region of grassland deterioration. Take the case of Xinjiang. According to Abliz Yusuf *et al.* (2009: 60-61), Xinjiang is the region of China with the

Figure 4 China: Deterioration of Natural Grassland



Source: Chen (2006: 21), Table 1-5 (data from Deng, 2005: 122).

largest area, widest distribution and most serious situation of desertification and grassland deterioration, a combined result of aridity, high temperature, over-farming, over-grazing and other man-made damages. Of Xinjiang's 87 counties and municipalities, as many as 80 counties and municipalities and more than 90 farms are affected by desertification. The total area of desertified land has reached 795,900 square kilometres, i.e. about half (49.71 per cent) of Xinjiang's total land area, or 30.35 per cent of China's total area of desertification. While the effective usable area of Xinjiang's natural grassland totals 480,000 square kilometres, the size of the area that suffers from serious deterioration has reached 80,000 to 130,000 square kilometres. In fact, a Tian Shan Mountain grassland has a deterioration area reaching 450 square kilometres or over 48 per cent of the usable grassland. Such desertification in Xinjiang is still currently expanding at the rate of 350 to 400 square kilometres per annum. On the other hand, Table 13 shows that the pasturelands of Tibet, Gansu and Sichuan have been deteriorating very rapidly too. Tibet's area of deterioration was 24.267 million hectares in 1980, with a deterioration rate of 29.6 per cent. The deterioration area rose to 29.285 million hectares by 2000, with a deterioration rate of 35.7 per cent, i.e. an increase of 6 percentage points in 20 years. Gansu's area of deterioration was 2.351 million hectares in 1980, with a deterioration rate of 26.7 per cent. The deterioration area rose to 4.405 million hectares by 2000, with a deterioration rate of 50 per cent, i.e. an increase of 23.3 percentage points in 20 years. Sichuan's area of deterioration was only 1.333 million hectares in 1980, with a deterioration rate of only 9.8 per cent. However, the deterioration area tripled within 20 years and rose to 4.541 million hectares by 2000, with a rapid rise in deterioration rate to 33.3 per cent. Qinghai's area of deterioration was 4.398 million hectares in 1980, with a deterioration rate of 12.1 per cent. The deterioration area rose to 20.367 million hectares by 2000, with deterioration rate increased tremendously to 56 per cent, i.e. a shocking increase of 44 percentage points in 20 years.

Of course, oasisization does occur alongside desertification, as pointed out by Abliz Yusuf *et al.* (2009: 60-61) in the case of Xinjiang, and with diminishing buffer zone between the oasis and desert which are both expanding, the oasis environment is constantly under threat from saltization, desertification and pollution, as the environmental situation of mountains, plains and deserts outside the oases is still in disequilibrium and continuing to deteriorate. With oases constituting only 4.3 per cent of Xinjiang's total land area and 11.1 per cent of total effective usable land area, overall deterioration is still much larger than improvement. Adding to that is the issue of soil erosion which has reached a total area of 103 square kilometres or 28.1 per cent of national soil erosion area, making it Xinjiang's number one environmental problem. As Abliz Yusuf *et al.* (2009: 63) further highlighted, with over 90 per cent of the rural population who are in poverty living in the



Table 13 China: Area and Rate of Grassland Deterioration in Tibet, Qinghai, Gansu and Sichuan

Year	Tibet		Qinghai		Gansu		Sichuan	
	Area of grassland deterioration (million hectares)	Rate of grassland deterioration (%)	Area of grassland deterioration (million hectares)	Rate of grassland deterioration (%)	Area of grassland deterioration (million hectares)	Rate of grassland deterioration (%)	Area of grassland deterioration (million hectares)	Rate of grassland deterioration (%)
1980	24.267	29.6	4.398	12.1	2.351	26.7	1.333	9.8
1990	11.428	13.9	6.191	17.0	3.506	39.8	2.045	15.0
1995	24.944	30.4	5.565	15.3	3.982	45.2	2.154	15.8
1996	21	25.6	10.9	30.0	4.22	47.9	3.981	29.2
2000	29.285	35.7	20.367	56.0	4.229/4.4*	48.0/50.0*	4.541	33.3

\* Two figures for year 2000 given by Deng (2005) are based on two different data sources.  
Source: Chen (2006: 22-23), Tables 1-6, 1-7, 1-8, 1-9 (original source: Deng, 2005: 128-130).

environmentally relatively appalling areas, Xinjiang's severely worsening grassland ecology – with 85 per cent of the region's grassland area suffering from various degrees of deterioration including up to 37.5 per cent from severe deterioration – is leading to intensifying soil erosion and frequent sandstorms, adversely affecting livestock husbandry and becoming the one of the main causes of deepening poverty.

Adding to these problems, there is an alarming degree of wastage and environmental damage in resource exploitation in the western region, the former being partly due to the fact that the right for exploitation is given by the government via administrative measures, hence does not feature in the enterprises' cost structure. Furthermore, resource tax by production volume is as low as just 1.18 per cent of resource volume on average. Zero cost of access to resource and extremely low resource tax have thus led to tremendous wastage in exploitation. For instance, for some oil wells in northern Shaanxi, only around 100 kilograms could be extracted from every ton of crude oil reserve, the other more than 800 kilograms being completely wasted. (*Zhongguo Xibu Jingji Fazhan Baogao 2006*, p. 272) Such over-exploitation and wastage, coupled with neglect in environmental protection, have also led to increasingly severe environmental degradation. For instance, in Shaanxi's Shenmu 神木 county, over-exploitation by the county's 216 coal enterprises has resulted in a cavity of up to 99.12 square kilometres in size, leading to 19 cave-ins. Cave-ins, death of plant life due to the drying up of groundwater, and severe water and air pollution are making the mining regions increasingly uninhabitable. It was reported that while cave-ins are making land uncultivable for farmers and causing grazing problems for animal husbandry, and diminishing groundwater is drying up wells which households depend on for drinking water, the mining company is paying villagers a cave-in compensation of just RMB20 cents for every ton of coal. (*ibid.*: 272-273)

#### 4. Public Protests and Social Crisis

These are the times that try men's souls [...] Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives every thing its value.

– Thomas Paine (1776), *The American Crisis*, 1<sup>24</sup>

Poverty and inequality are among the key factors underlying social disturbances. Various estimates have shown an increase in collective protest incidents from 8,700 in 1994 to 90,000 in 2006 and further to 127,000 in 2008.<sup>25</sup> According to official statistics, “illegal” *quntixing shijian* 群体性事件 (or *qunti shijian* 群体事件, literally “mass incidents”) nationwide increased from 10,000 to 74,000 cases over the decade of 1994-2004, with an average

annual growth rate of 22.2 per cent, while the number of people involved in the *qunti shijian* went up from 730,000 to 3,760,000, with an average annual growth rate of 17.8 per cent (Hu, Hu and Wang, 2006). The figures continued to climb to 87,000 cases and about 4 million people by 2005 (Yeoh, 2010a: 256, Figures 9 and 10). In general, the number of *qunti shijian* had been rising at an alarmingly increasing rate. From a growth of about 10 per cent from 1995 to 1996, *qunti shijian* was growing at an average annual rate of as high as 25.5 per cent from 1997 to 2004, i.e. higher than the average growth rate of 22.2 per cent during the decade of 1994-2004, with annual growth in certain years reaching as high as above 40 per cent; or with 1994 figure indexed 100, a steep increase of the index from 100 to 740 in terms of the number of cases during the decade of 1994-2004 (an increase of 6.4 times) and from 100 to 515 in terms of the number of people involved (an increase of 4.2 times) (*ibid.*).

#### 4.1. Nature and Types of Public Protests

In terms of the participants' profiles, while at the beginning the people involved in these "mass incidents" were mainly *xiagang* workers<sup>26</sup> and peasants (reflecting land loss and corruption issues) but later on the list of participants expanded to include, besides *xiagang* workers and peasants who lost their lands, also workers, urban residents, private individual enterprise owners (*getihu*), teachers, students and a small number of ex-servicemen and cadres, etc. (Hu, Hu, He and Guo, 2009: 143; Yeoh, 2010a: 257, Figure 11), thus reflecting expanding and deepening popular interest conflicts and contradictions. The changing and expanding class structure is not only a society-wide phenomenon but also occurring within the particular social class itself, thus making the grievances of the class-within-class even more acute. Donaldson and Zhang, for instance, classified China's farmers today into five categories based on their role as direct producers and their class relations with the agribusinesses – "commercial farmers" who work independently on allocated family land; "contract farmers" who work on allocated family land to fulfill company contracts, whose harvests are sold to the contracting companies, and while being dominated by the companies manage to retain some flexibility; "semi-proletarian farmers with Chinese characteristics", mainly hired villagers who work on collective land rented to companies as company employees, whose harvests belong to the company, and while being dominated by the companies manage to enjoy a degree of entitlement; "semi-proletarian farm workers", mainly hired migrant labourers who work on company land as company employees, whose harvests belong to the companies, and while being dominated by the companies do have family land at home as a fall-back option; and "proletarian farm workers", mainly hired

landless labourers who work on company land as employees, whose harvests belong to the companies, and who, unlike the other four categories, suffer from complete domination by the companies (Donaldson and Zhang, 2009: 99, Table 6.1).

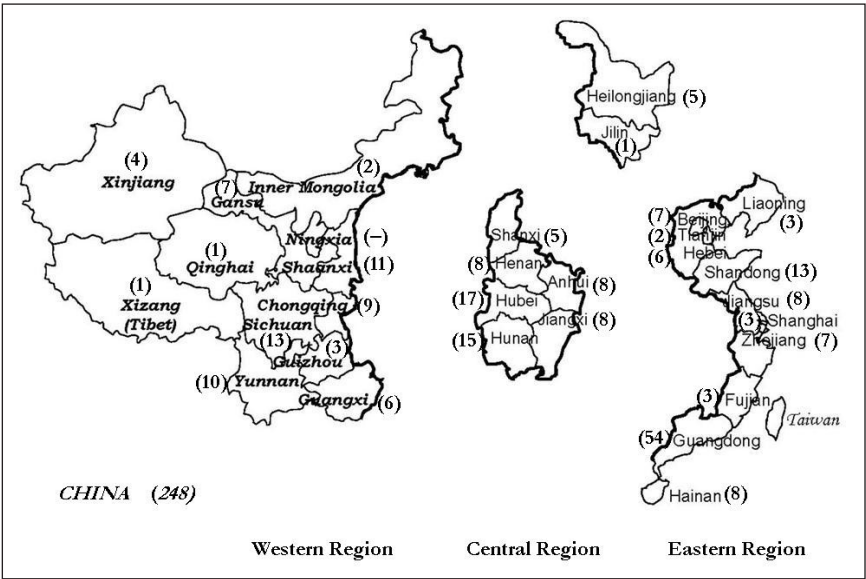
On the other hand, Tong and Lei (2010) documented a total of 248 “large-scale mass incidents” (those with more than 500 participants, according to China’s Ministry of Public Security)<sup>27</sup> from 2003 to 2009 (Table 14).

Table 14 China: Large-scale Mass Incidents, 2003-2009

Year	Total Number of Large-scale Mass Incidents
2003	9
2004	20
2005	9
2006	25
2007	63
2008	76
2009	46

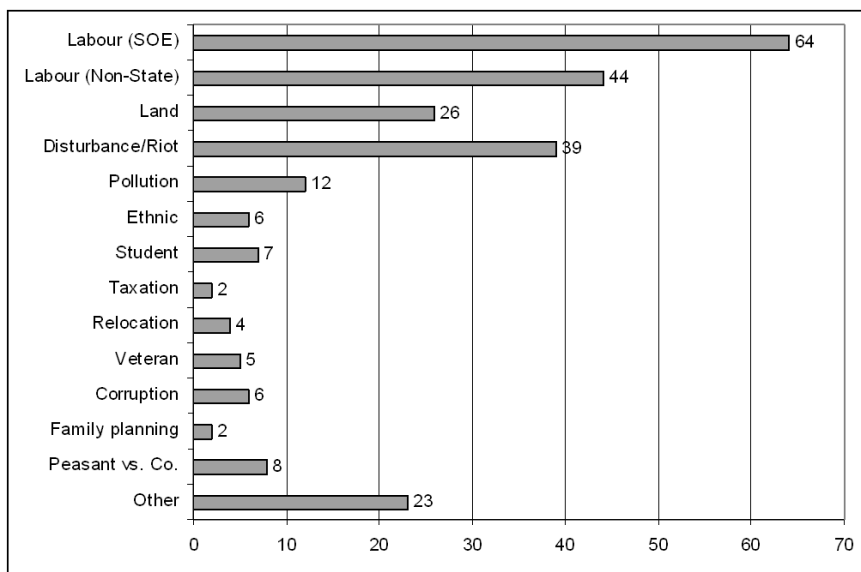
Source: Tong and Lei (2010: 489), Figure 1.

Figure 5 China: Frequency of Large-scale Mass Incidents by Province, 2003-2009



Source: Tong and Lei (2010: 490), Table 1.

Figure 6 Large-scale Mass Incidents by Type (Total Number during 2003-2009)



Source: Tong and Lei (2010: 491), Table 2.

While large-scale mass incidents come in various types, labour and land/relocation disputes top the list (Figure 6), followed by social disturbances and riots usually triggered by isolated incidents but reflecting the people's long-simmering distrust of local government officials with accusation of corruption and government-business collusion (*guan-shang goujie* 官商勾结): the well-known cases being the Weng'an 瓮安 incident of 2008, Shishou 石首 incident of 2009 and the recent riots in mid-June 2011 involving thousands in Taizhou 台州, Zhejiang Province, in a series of latest large-scale riots that also included the disturbances in Guangdong Province's Chaozhou 潮州, Zhejiang Province's Shaoxing 绍兴, Hubei Province's Lichuan 利川 and Xintang 新塘 township of Zengcheng 增城 City (of the metropolis of Guangzhou 广州, Guangdong Province).<sup>28</sup> It is undeniable that underlying these large-scale public protests is the issue of rapidly growing economic inequality in the forms of widening income gap, lack of social safety net and perception of social and government injustice, as Tong and Lei commented, "[...] local governments and police force were generally perceived as corrupt and incompetent. The fact that the police force were often dispatched in favour of the capitalists who have close relationship with the government whenever there was a dispute between peasants and the companies reinforced the public perception. There was a profound distrust of the government." (Tong and

Lei, 2010: 498) Such social disturbances and riots with no specific economic demands are seen as the most system-threatening because they are challenging rather than endorsing regime legitimacy:

The outburst of disturbances is often the product of broad and diffused social grievances over a variety of issues ranging from inequality, corruption and social injustice to increasing drug addiction. Disturbance is often triggered by poor local governance, especially the misconduct of *chengguan* [城管, i.e. staff members of the city management agency] or the police. In these cases, social anger, not economic demands, is directed at the authorities.

(*ibid.*: 501)

#### 4.2. Distrust of Political Authority

The frequency and scale of the recent riots has undeniably been increasingly alarming to the government, giving rise to the allegation that the Xintang authorities were under the direct secret order of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party to fabricate the image of the mid-June 2011 Xintang riots as purely clashes between the Sichuan migrant workers and the local Cantonese, even by enlisting the underworld to orchestrate attacks, in order to transform the protests against the government into inter-communal conflicts and to justify the suppression of public protests and demonstrations. On the other hand, the government media *Renmin Ribao* 人民日报 (*People's Daily*) has blamed the riots on cultural clash between migrant workers and the local people, while some scholars have attributed the recent Guangdong riots to the recession of an open economy, and the lack of security in the livelihood of the twenty million migrant workers in the province who are also suffering from discrimination and being bullied and harassed by the local underworld and other powers that be. On the other hand, Beijing sociologist Yu Jianrong 于建嵘 pointed to the alarming fact that the recent spate of social disturbances (see Table 15)<sup>29</sup>, e.g. in Lizhou (Hubei) and Inner Mongolia, were triggered by “sudden events/emergencies” (*tufa shijian* 突发事件) and their participants were mostly unrelated to the original cause and without clear interest demands.<sup>30</sup> However, in venting their discontent towards society, the absence of “free-floating aggression” is notable (in contrast with, e.g., the recent summer riots across British cities in August 2011), and the government and State authorities have been the main targets of attack. Widespread support has even been noted on the Internet for such attacks on government offices and even in the case of the killing of judges. During the spate of wanton killings of primary school and kindergarten children that shocked the nation in 2010, the sudden outbreak of fatal free-floating aggression against these young children across China that occurred from March to May 2010 which caused the death of a total of 17

Table 15 Spate of Social Disturbances in May-June 2011

Beginning date of riot	Place	Details
3rd May	Shehong 射洪 County, Sichuan Province	After a secondary school teacher was mistaken as a murderer and beaten up by plain-cloth policemen, over a thousand people including teachers and students demonstrated and destroyed the police station and county government office.
13th May	Tianzhu 天祝 County, Gansu Province	A dismissed employee threw petrol bomb and injured over 60 people.
23rd May	Inner Mongolia	Death of a herdsman after being hit by a coal truck led to demonstrations.
26th May	Fuzhou 抚州 City, Jiangxi Province	A shangfang petitioner detonated bombs at three places including the city attorney's office, killing 3 and injuring 9.
6th June	Chaozhou 潮州 City, Guangdong Province	On 1st June, a 19-year-old Sichuan migrant worker Xiong Hanjiang 熊汉江 asking for unpaid wages of 2,000 yuan was assaulted and had his hand and leg muscles severed, leading to a 10000-people riot, with 18 injured. The badly injured Xiong had recovered in the hospital but could be handicapped for life.
8th June	Shaoxing 绍兴 City, Zhejiang Province	Seven thousand workers and villagers demonstrated against a tin foil factory that had been polluting the place for many years.
9th June	Lichuan 利川 County, Hubei Province	After former anti-corruption office director Ran Jianxin 冉建新 died during interrogation, over a thousand people who believed he was beaten to death walked on the streets and clashed with police.
10th June	Xintang 新塘 Township, Guangdong Province	A pregnant Sichuan woman and her husband who were roadside pedlars were beaten up by security personnel who were allegedly extorting protection money from the couple, leading to a riot by over a thousand Sichuan migrant workers who destroyed the government office and police vehicles, reportedly with 5 people killed, over a hundred injured and hundreds arrested. There are five

Table 15 (continued)

Beginning date of riot	Place	Details
		million Sichuan migrant workers in Guangdong, of whom a hundred thousand are in Xintang.
12th June	Zhengzhou 郑州 City, Henan Province	Over 400 residents of Waliu 洼刘 Village of Shifo 石佛 Township demonstrated against the government over forced relocation and unfair compensation, after unidentified thugs beat up villagers protecting their homes.
13th June	Changsha 长沙 City, Hunan Province	Over 500 residents demonstrated against the government over forced relocation.
14th June	Loudi 娄底 City, Hunan Province	Residents demonstrated against the building of a 220,000-volt cable tower; many injured.
15th June	Taizhou 台州 City, Zhejiang Province	Believing that the village official of the Jiaojiang 椒江 District had been embezzling land acquisition subsidies over the past nine years, thousands of villagers besieged and destroyed Sinopec's petrol station.

people, including 15 children, and injured more than 80, in a string of five major attacks and four other cases that occurred from 23rd March to 12th May (including those that killed 8 and injured 5 in Fujian province, killed 2 and injured 5 in Guangxi, injured 19 in Guangdong, injured 32 in Jiangsu, injured 5 in Shandong and killed 9 in Shaanxi), and another attack on 3rd August that killed 4 and injured more than 20 at a kindergarten in Shandong (Yeoh, 2010a: 247), an iconic banner allegedly appeared at the gate of a kindergarten which read: “*Yuan You Tou Zhai You Zhu, Qianmian You Zhuan Shi Zhengfu* 冤有头债有主 前面右转是政府” [there's a real culprit responsible for any wrong or any debt; take a right turn in front you'll find the government (offices)]. While this can be interpreted as a sarcastic advice to re-direct the free-floating aggression towards the real target of social grievances, the alleged State orchestration of the perception of Xintang disturbances as a clash between the migrant workers and local people would be tantamount to an attempt in re-channelling the anti-State sentiments into inter-communal scapegoating.<sup>31</sup> Stemming from profound distrust of the government, as Tong and Lei (2010) observed above, such social disturbances and riots with no specific economic demands are the most system-threatening as they are challenging rather than endorsing regime legitimacy.



### 4.3. System-threatening Social Movements

Governments now act as if they were afraid to awaken a single reflection in man. They are softly leading him to the sepulchre of precedents, to deaden his faculties and call his attention from the scene of revolutions. They feel that he is arriving at knowledge faster than they wish, and their policy of precedents is the barometer of their fears [...] Government by precedent, without any regard to the principle of the precedent, is one of the vilest systems that can be set up.

– Thomas Paine (1792), *Rights of Man, Part the Second*, Chapter IV

Such a distinction between system-threatening and non-system-threatening protests as Tong and Lei pointed out has always been important for explaining State response. Referring to Muslim marchers in 1989 protesting the publication of a Chinese book entitled *Xing Fengsu* 性风俗 [sexual customs] that they claimed denigrated Islam, Gladney drew a parallel with the other, more well-known, protest of 1989:

Just prior to the bloody suppression of the 1989 democracy movement in China, in the midst of the flood of protesting students and workers who, for a remarkably lengthy moment in history, marched relatively unimpeded across Tiananmen Square and the screens of the world's television sets, another comparatively unnoticed, but nevertheless significant, procession took place [...] the protest began with mainly Hui Muslim students who were joined by representatives of all 10 Muslim nationalities in China, including some sympathetic members of the Han Chinese majority [...] this procession was on its way to Tiananmen Square, the so-called "Gate of Heavenly Peace", which soon opened on to a hellish nightmare of indiscriminate warfare in the streets of the terrorized city. This procession to the Square also made its way along Changan Jie, "the Avenue of Eternal Peace," that shortly thereafter was to be renamed "Bloody Alley" by Beijing's citizens [...]

(Gladney, 1991: 1-2)

Gladney moved on further to draw an interesting picture of stark contrast in State responses between this case of "protest *to* the government" and the other case of "protest *against* the government" in those same days<sup>32</sup> staged by the students and workers and their supporters from all walks of life around Beijing and other Chinese cities who eventually paid dearly by blood:

Remarkably, and in another dramatic contrast to the crackdown on the student Pro-Democracy Movement, the state took the following actions in response to this Muslim protest over an insignificant Chinese book: The government granted full permission for all the Muslim protests, often despatching police to close streets, stop traffic, and direct the marchers [...] By stressing the legality of the Muslim protests, what Barbara Pillsbury noted as their "protest *to* the government," rather than *against* it – the fact

that the Muslims had permission and were often escorted by police – the state-controlled press sought to juxtapose the legal Muslim protest with the *illegality* of the student protests.

(*ibid.*: 3-5, italics in the original)

These “illegal” student protests of 1989 in Tiananmen 天安门 Square, despite State disapproval, soon evolved into the now well-known broad-based pro-democracy movement after being joined in by other demonstrators from all walks of life from Beijing to Hong Kong 香港, from Chengdu 成都 to Shenzhen 深圳, and was sustained against all odds throughout the 100-day Beijing Spring<sup>33</sup> that tragically ended up with, *à la Asiaweek*, the Rape of Beijing<sup>34</sup> on that fateful night of 3rd-4th June 1989, when a besieged regime finally responded with a massacre to reclaim the capital from the unarmed peaceful protesters. While the official death toll stood at four hundred and forty-three, 223 of whom were soldiers and police officers, plus 5,000 soldiers and police officers and 2,000 civilians wounded in the crackdown, exiled dissidents estimated the number of civilians, workers and students killed in the crackdown during the night of 3rd-4th June 1989 to be from 2,000 to 3,000 (Yeoh, 2010a: 273). Soviet sources in 1989 put the number massacred in Beijing as 3,000, as cited by Mikhail Gorbachev at a politburo meeting in 1989.<sup>35</sup>

One of the most prominent student leaders who led the pro-democracy demonstrations in Tiananmen Square was Örkesh Dölet (Wu'erkaixi 吾尔开希) who, together with Chai Ling 柴玲, Wang Dan 王丹, Feng Congde 封从德 and other student leaders, had launched the Tiananmen Square demonstrations of 1989 against official corruption and political repression. It is interesting to note that Örkesh Dölet was then a Beijing Normal University student of the Muslim Uyghur nationality. However, unlike the protesters in the parallel State-permitted demonstration in Beijing at that time against *Xing Fengsu*, Örkesh Dölet's involvement in leading the pro-democracy movement since the Tiananmen days till today transcends ethnicity, and it was notable that his recent condemnation – jointly issued on 7th July 2009 with Taiwan's China Human Rights Association (中國人權協會) – of perceived government repression in the July 2009 Xinjiang disturbance was issued, while not denying his ethnic identity, as a civil rights activist<sup>36</sup>, in comparison with some pronouncements made by former Nobel Peace Prize nominee Rabiya Qadir (Rebiya Kadeer), chairperson of the World Uyghur Congress<sup>37</sup>. Nevertheless, in the eyes of the Party-State during those turbulent days of 1989:

The students [demonstrating on Tiananmen Square in 1989 against corruption and for democracy], as an unrecognized voluntary association, were considered unlawful, riotous, and a threat to the state's order. For that they were met by a military crackdown. The actions of the Muslims [marching against the book *Xing Fengsu*], as members of state-assigned minority

nationalities and believing in a world religion approved by the state, were considered permissible. For that they were inundated with state-sponsored media and assisted in their demands. The difference, from the Chinese state's standpoint, was one of order and disorder, rationality and confusion, law and criminality, reward and punishment.

(Gladney, 1991: 5-6)

However, ultimately, as Fang (1991: 254-255) warned, "There is no rational basis for a belief that this kind of dictatorship can overcome the corruption that it itself has bred. Based on this problem alone, we need more effective means of public supervision and a more independent judiciary. This means, in effect, more democracy."<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, the path towards a North Atlantic liberal democracy as envisaged by Fang has seemed increasingly forlorn as the CCP regime has in the post-June Fourth era led the country to economic miracle and hence, in the eyes of many, has successfully reasserted its legitimacy.<sup>39</sup> Describing China as "doubtless a post-totalitarian regime ruled by a ruthless Party", Béja (2009: 14-15) ruminated on the 20th anniversary of the Beijing massacre:

Twenty years after the 4 June 1989 massacre, the CCP seems to have reinforced its legitimacy. It has not followed the communist regimes of the Soviet bloc into oblivion. Its policies of elite cooptation, subtle response to social contradictions, and instrumental support for the "rule of law" have become major complements to its continued control over the press and the political system. It has made concessions to prevent discontent from crystallizing into social movements that might challenge its rule, and it has sent in the police to silence dissidents. Over the course of the same two decades, the opposition has had to wrestle with the trauma of the June 4 Massacre and the huge difficulties that it has raised for anyone who would challenge the CCP's primacy.

#### ***4.4. State Response to Social Movements and the Shopworn Conspiracy Theories***

Successful it might seem to be, the CCP regime's reassertion of its legitimacy and unassailability has in reality not been immune to a series of challenges, some rather severe and unexpected, since June Fourth, exemplified by the horrific events of March 2008 in Tibet and July 2009 in Xinjiang. Regrettably, in facing such challenges, the regime has never been able to grow out of the tendency to recycle the "black hand" (*heishou* 黑手) theory – the "shopworn conspiracy theories that blame mass protests primarily on the CCP's foreign and domestic enemies, reflecting the classic Leninist insistence that social protest in a Communist country cannot just happen, it must be instigated" (Tanner, 2004: 143) – which is unfortunately so apparent in the ruling regime's

response to the Xinjiang crisis or the Tibet riots. For this “black hand” theory, Tanner gave an example from the 1989 Beijing massacre:

In the days after the Tiananmen demonstrations, this Leninist conspiratorial worldview was typified in a report on the protests issued by Gu Linfang, the Chinese vice minister of public security who was in charge of “political security.” To document a conspiracy in 1989, Gu painstakingly listed dozens of allegedly nefarious contacts among protest leaders; reformist Communist officials; foreign academics; and, of course, Western and Taiwanese intelligence agencies. The vice minister railed against party reformers for coddling schemers who fomented rebellion. A Leninist to his marrow, Gu refused to concede any acceptance of what social scientists have known for decades, that whenever a society grows and changes as rapidly as China has, an increase in political protests is a normal development.

(*ibid.*)

Similar State response can be observed following the 5th July 2009 Xinjiang riots when Nur Bekri, chairman of the Xinjiang Uygur Zizhiqu, declared on 18th July 2009 the source of the riots being “the triumvirate of terrorist, secessionist and extremist forces”<sup>40</sup> and Wu Shimin 吴仕民, vice-chairman of China’s State Ethnic Affairs Commission, stated on 21st July 2009 that the July Fifth riots had absolutely nothing to do with China’s nationality (ethnic minority) policies. Without the courage to face up to domestic realities, any solution to the root problems leading to either June Fourth or July Fifth would remain illusive. The ruling regime’s inability to face domestic realities is further manifested in the continued repression including the arrest of ethnic Uyghur economics professor Ilham Tohti of China’s Central Nationalities University and founder of the “Uighur Online” on 7th July 2009<sup>41</sup> and the revocation of licenses of civil rights lawyers who took up cases related to the Xinjiang riots.<sup>42</sup> In the case of the Tibetans, over 300 Tibetan monks were reportedly arrested during the night of 21st-22nd April 2011 in Sichuan Province’s Ngawa 阿坝 Zizhizhou 自治州 (“autonomous prefecture”) of the Tibetan/Zang 藏 and Qiang 羌 nationalities, the site of that devastating earthquake on 12th May 2008 which killed at least 68,000 people. Among the civilians holding a vigil outside the temple concerned, two elderly Tibetans were reportedly killed and various others injured during the police attack which was believed to be linked to the earlier demonstrations after a young Tibetan burned himself to death in self-immolation on 16th March 2011 at the 3rd anniversary of the 14th March 2008 Tibetan riots.<sup>43</sup>

#### ***4.5. Federalization and the Fear of Disintegration***

Coupled with the shopworn conspiracy theories is the federal taboo, in which federalization is inevitably seen as a prelude to disintegration – prominent

Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo 刘晓波 was arrested for organizing the signing of Charter 08 that included an Item 18 “A Federated Republic”<sup>44</sup> for which he was ostensibly charged – though how far that threat is genuinely believed remains dubious as liberal democracy could be the ultimate fear since democratization tends to go hand-in-hand with federalization. However, the danger of fragmentation coming from democratization and federalization is real but not inevitable.

One of the basic features of a federal system, according to Bakvis and Chandler (1987: 4), is that it provides “incentives for structuring group/class conflicts along territorial lines”. When the territories concerned represent the centres of concentration of distinctive socioracial communities, ethnic conflicts are translated into territorial rivalries and the process of fiscal federalization becomes an arena of ethnic resource competition. Nevertheless, Dorff (1994) warned that federal *structures*, when not accompanied by federal *process*, could have contributed to the fragmentation of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union, and these one-party states’ federalist structures, without federalist processes, initially used to suppress, not accommodate, ethnic differences, had actually helped to create a political environment ripe for disintegration via ethnic mobilization once decentralization began, as regional leaderships bent on protecting the interests of their territorial constituencies at the expense of other regions and the federation.

It could hence be highly equivocal to keep seeing the disintegration of Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Soviet Union as a sword of Democles warning against federal structures. On the contrary, the fate of these disintegrated nations could be a lesson to take heed of at this juncture just past the 22nd anniversary of June Fourth, in particular after the foreboding event of 5th July 2009, to begin early the federal process, before it becomes too late when eventually the moment of truth arrives for a China ripe for democratization<sup>45</sup> it turns out also to be the moment for a China ripe for disintegration. Definitely, a federal process is always full of pitfalls<sup>46</sup>, especially for a country still facing the problems of high incidence of poverty, ethnoterritoriality, sectionalism and ethnoregional socioeconomic disparities. Inevitably, it is also a process abounding with right and wrong options and choices.

The Chinese regional structure bears substantial similarity to the Spanish – for instance, only 3 out of Spain’s 17 *Comunidades Autónomas*, comprising less than 30 per cent of the country’s population, are non-Castilian ethnic regions, in contrast to countries like Belgium or the former Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia where the state is composed of constituent regions each of which populated predominantly with a differentiated ethnic community. As Spain is pondering her options whether to move on from the State of the Autonomies to a full-fledged federation – through a whole

spectrum of scenarios as summarized by Brassloff (1989: 41-45) into the evolutionist minimalist regional autonomist, radically revisionist neo-centralist, radically European regionalist, nationalist particularist, mixed federo-regional and, lastly, the federalist maximalist in which the presently evolving State of the Autonomies may develop all its potential and end up operating as a federal state – it could also be timely for a China in astounding transformation to ponder new options other than a *dictablanda* or even a *democradura*<sup>47</sup> with the perpetually uneasy coexistence of economic decentralization with political centralism or, as a former vice-premier pointed out, being constantly trapped in the perennial “cycles of decentralization and recentralization”<sup>48</sup> that breed unending chaos and instability.

#### 4.6. Ethnicity, Political Mobilization and Social Unrest

Among the types of large-scale mass incidents listed in Figure 6 earlier, Tong and Lei (2010: 495) observed that ethnic differences “are the most difficult to reconcile and are therefore the most persistent cause of social frictions and the most effective means in political mobilization” and ethnic conflicts “are usually not caused by economic grievances, as economic cleavages cross-cut ethnic lines”. As seen earlier, more recent cases of such public order disturbance were alarmingly on the rise in a series of serious incidents including, for example, year 2008’s high-profile conflicts of 28th June (in Guizhou), 5th July (Shaanxi), 10th July (Zhejiang), 17th July (Guangdong) and 19th July (Yunnan). Yet these constitute but just a small sample of the overall rise in social unrest across China in recent years, some of which involved ethnic conflicts<sup>49</sup>. Adding to these are the long-running Tibet conflicts including the March 2008 Lhasa riots and the March 2009 conflict in Qinghai Province’s Guoluo 果洛 Tibetan *Zizhizhou*<sup>50</sup>, as well as the July 2009 Ürümqi riots.

With the memory of the 1989 tragedy constantly hanging like the sword of Damocles, the ruling regime is again facing a dire dilemma, as described by Tanner (2004):

[...] the struggle to control unrest will force Beijing’s leaders to face riskier dilemmas than at any time since the 1989 Tiananmen Square demonstrations. Experiments with less violent police tactics, economic concessions to demonstrators, and more fundamental institutional reforms all risk further encouraging protest in an increasingly restive society. Nevertheless, these challenges must be navigated if the party wants to avoid the ultimate dilemma of once again resorting to 1989-style violence or reluctantly engaging in a more fundamental renegotiation of power relations between the state and society.

(Tanner, 2004: 138)

## 5. Dilemma of Political Reform and State Response to Dissent

You will do me the justice to remember, that I have always strenuously supported the right of every man to his own opinion, however different that opinion might be to mine. He who denies to another this right, makes a slave of himself to his present opinion, because he precludes himself the right of changing it.

– Thomas Paine (1794), *The Age of Reason*, Part First<sup>51</sup>

Such renegotiation of power relations between the State and the civil society, however, inevitably faces critical restriction given that the CCP regime is in no way prepared to take the risk of having to relinquish its monopoly of power in the process of free multi-party elections. Indeed, while promoting the rural elections in 1987, Peng Zhen 彭真 had already argued that such elections were to be used to help the Chinese Communist Party govern the country's rural areas and perpetuate the Party's rule (Zheng and Lye, 2004).

### 5.1. "Rights-defending" Activism and the State

Hence, any perception that such electoral initiatives are implying that the Party is loosening its stranglehold over China's politics could be illusory as the signals conveyed by the ruling regime regarding the tolerance threshold for dissent remain unmistakable, not least highlighted in recent years by the relentless arrest and jailing of dissidents, including civil rights lawyers Gao Zhisheng 高智晟, Zheng Enchong 郑恩宠 and Chen Guangcheng 陈光诚, researcher Zhao Yan 赵岩 and *Straits Times* (Singapore) journalist Ching Cheong 程翔. Other cases included the arrest of Hu Jia 胡佳, an AIDS and environmental activist, in December 2007, on subversion charges, and Wang Dejia 王德佳, a cyber dissident, in the same month, also on subversion charges for criticizing the government over human rights abuses ahead of the Beijing Olympics (Lye, 2009: 239), and many other civil rights activists including the latest case of well-known rights defender Wang Lihong 王荔蕻 who was arrested on 21st March 2011 in Beijing for her protesting the government's charge against three bloggers in April 2010 outside the court of Fuzhou 福州 City, though the authorities had still seemed to be unable to settle down to a convincing charge against her by the second half of the year<sup>52</sup>. Wang's arrest and the State's struggle to convict her show the increasing uneasiness of the State over the rising use of the Internet for *weiquan*-related social movements. The 56-year-old Wang has been a long-term activist involved in fighting for the rights of the disadvantaged, including the case of Deng Yujiao 邓玉娇, the Hubei girl who killed an official who was trying to rape her, and the murder of the girl Yan Xiaoling 严晓玲. Wang was finally sentenced on 9th September 2011 to 9 months in prison

on the charge of provocation and disturbance.<sup>53</sup> In another case of 2011, a Sichuan dissident writer, Ran Yunfei 冉云飞, was arrested in mid-February on accusation of “jasmine revolution” sedition, later released in August but still under virtual house arrest.<sup>54</sup> He was charged on 17th August with sedition to subvert State power, placed under house arrest pending court hearing, at the time when two other Sichuan dissident intellectuals, Ding Mao 丁矛 in Chengdu 成都 and Chen Weiyin 陈卫因 in Suining 遂宁, were also arrested pending similar indictments.<sup>55</sup>

In the case of Hu Jia, he was charged with “inciting subversion of State power” and sentenced on 3rd April 2008 to three and a half years in prison for his voicing out on social problems and human rights and on the case of Gao Zhisheng. Hu was released on 26th June 2011 but continued to be under tight surveillance. To avoid possible house arrest, his wife and daughter moved to Shenzhen just before his release but were evicted by the houseowner citing heavy pressure from the top.<sup>56</sup> During Hu Jia’s imprisonment, his 3-year-old daughter Hu Qianci 胡谦慈 became probably China’s youngest political prisoner when she was put under house arrest together with her mother Zeng Jinyan 曾金燕. With Hu Jia ending his jail term, according to Amnesty International, there are still at least 130 rights-defending activists in China who continue to be incarcerated, forced “disappeared”, harassed or held under house arrest.<sup>57</sup> For instance, civil rights lawyer Gao Zhisheng who first disappeared in August 2006 was later charged with subversion of State power and sentenced to three years’ imprisonment with a five-year probation. He disappeared again in February 2009 after being taken away by the government from his Shaanxi home but reemerged briefly in March/April 2010. In a press interview at that time he revealed that he had been tortured. He disappeared again a month later after he returned home, escorted by government security agents, to pray to his late mother during the *Qingming* 清明 (traditional day of remembrance for ancestors) of April 2010.<sup>58</sup>

The most high-profile case in recent years is, however, that of the Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo 刘晓波, who played a prominent role in the 1989 Tiananmen demonstrations and hunger strikes, who was remanded in police custody on 8th December 2008 for organizing the signing of Charter 08 (*Ling-ba Xianzhang* 零八宪章) that managed to gather over 300 signatures of prominent Chinese citizens on the eve of the International Human Rights Day. Charter 08 was conceived and written in emulation of the founding of Charter 77 in former Czechoslovakia in January 1977 by over two hundred Czech and Slovak intellectuals, including the dissident playwright and future Czech president Václav Havel. The number of signatories to Charter 08, local and overseas, later increased to about 7,000 by March 2009<sup>59</sup> and continued to rise. After being taken away for half a year,



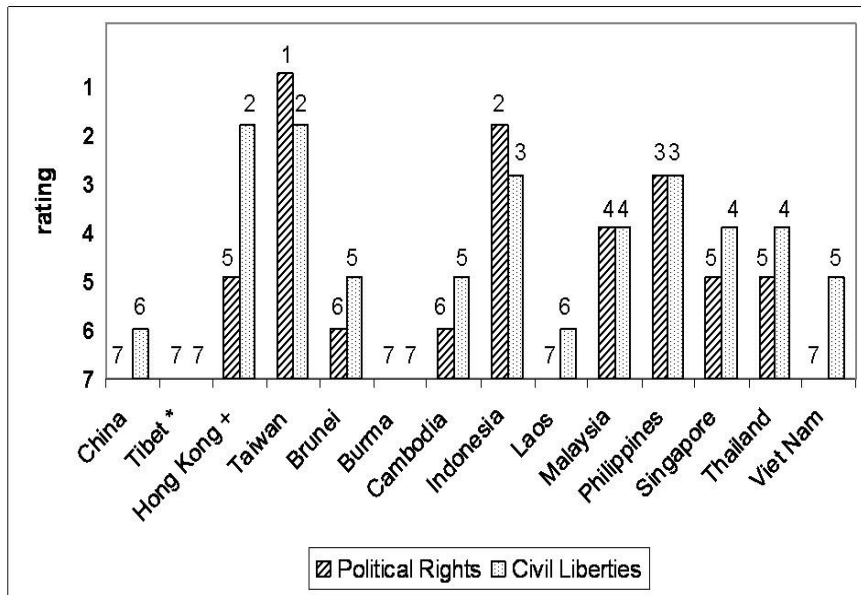
Liu was “formally” arrested on sedition charges on 23rd June 2009 and later sentenced to 11 years of imprisonment.<sup>60</sup> Liu was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on 8th October 2010.

About the time Liu was handed the harsh sentence, China’s civil rights issues were also thrust into the limelight with the release of dissident Yang Zili 杨子立 after eight years of imprisonment for advocating political reform on the Internet, while his fellow dissidents Jin Haike 靳海科 and Xu Wei 徐伟 were still languishing in prison.<sup>61</sup> Yang, Jin and Xu, together with Zhang Yanhua 张彦华 and Zhang Honghai 张宏海, were members of the Xin Qingnian Xuehui 新青年学会 (New Youth Study Group) they set up in 2000 for the exploration of China’s political and social reforms. The case of a former People’s Liberation Army (PLA)<sup>62</sup> soldier Zhang Shijun 张世军 who was taken away by the authorities in 2009, as the year’s 20th anniversary of the 1989 Beijing massacre was approaching, after writing an open letter to President Hu Jintao 胡锦涛 through the Internet citing the “unspeakable atrocities” he witnessed committed against civilians and students twenty years earlier on that fateful night of 3rd-4th June 1989 while serving in a unit that was involved in the bloody crackdown – a rare eyewitness account from inside the PLA – is another reference point for reading civil rights development in China.<sup>63</sup> Besides these high-profile cases, there are also many other little observed arrests and imprisonments that rarely raise an eyebrow beyond the border.

Further developments saw the government closing down the Open Constitution Initiative (OCI) (*Gongmeng* 公盟) on 17th July 2009 ostensibly for tax offenses, subsequent to the 5th July 2009 Xinjiang riots and with the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic approaching. OCI is a legal research centre set up in 2003 which has been involved in various sensitive cases in recent years – including the case of the blind civil rights lawyer Chen Guangcheng, the melamine-contaminated baby milk scandal, and various other civil rights and press freedom cases – and published critical reports on China’s human rights and minority policies. The suppression of OCI came after the revoking of the licenses of 53 Beijing lawyers, many of whom being well-known personalities active in civil rights cases.<sup>64</sup>

In the 2011 Freedom House’s Annual Global Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties (ratings reflect events from 1st January 2010, through 31st December 2010), China was rated 7 (i.e. the worst rating) on political rights and 6 (next to worst) on civil liberties (see Figure 7), making her one of the 19 “worst of the worst” countries in terms of political rights and civil liberties (Puddington, 2011: 4), just marginally better than North Korea, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Libya, Sudan, Burma<sup>65</sup>, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea and Somalia that were all rated 7 on both political rights and civil liberties (Freedom House, 2011).

Figure 7 China, Taiwan and ASEAN: Political Rights and Civil Liberties, 2010



Notes: 1 is the best rating, 7 the worst. Ratings reflect events from 1st January 2010, through 31st December 2010.

\* Xizang (Tibet) Zizhiqu (“autonomous region”), China

<sup>+</sup> Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR), China

Source: Data from Freedom House (2011).

### 5.2. Predators of the Press

According to the advocacy group Reporters Sans Frontiers (Reporters without Borders), there are more journalists in prison in China than anywhere else in the world.<sup>66</sup> A report of the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) at the end of January 2009 accused China of renegeing on her promise of press freedom during her bid for hosting the Olympics and called for the country to immediately release imprisoned journalists and halt the repression of journalists with the current national security and other laws – and this came amidst reports that a new series of rules and regulations would be launched in 2009 to strengthen the control on journalists and news reporting ostensibly for maintaining quality and authenticity in news reporting.<sup>67</sup>

Freedom House in its *Freedom of the Press 2010* issued on the World Press Freedom Day of 3rd May 2011 covering 196 countries and regions recognized 68 as having press freedom, 65 partially free and 63 unfree. Among them, China is without press freedom, being ranked 184th, while Hong Kong is partially free, ranked 70th, and Taiwan is free, ranked 47th.<sup>68</sup>

In her comments to the Voice of America, the 1997 UNESCO/Guillermo Cano World Press Freedom Prize laureate, Chinese reporter Gao Yu 高瑜 accused that other than being without press freedom, today's media milieu in China could not even be compared to the 1980s, with the current atmosphere of severe self-censorship and constant fear of being persecuted.<sup>69</sup> Press freedom has apparently also been further curtailed after the recent spate of jasmine revolutions-inspired incidents which were swiftly nipped in the bud, with officials going all out to enforce self-censorship to protect their own careers. Earlier, Lye (2009: 215, 237) also cited Reporters Sans Frontiers ranking China number 167 out of a total of 173 countries in its 2008 Worldwide Press Freedom Index and considering the number of arrests and cases of news surveillance and control by China's political police and Department of Propaganda to be very high, and Human Rights Watch asserting that China's extensive police and State security apparatus continued to impose upon civil society activists, critics and protestors multiple layers of controls that included "professional and administrative measures, limitations on foreign travel and domestic movement, monitoring (covert and overt) of the Internet and phone communications, abduction and confinement incommunicado, and unofficial house arrests [and] a variety of vaguely defined crimes including 'inciting subversion', 'leaking state secrets' and 'disrupting social order' [which] provide the government with wide legal remit to stifle critics". Another development saw the Foreign Correspondents' Club of China – an organization with more than 260 members from 33 countries – issuing a statement in August 2009 accusing China of reneging on her 2008 Olympics promise of freer foreign press reporting, based on a member survey in the previous month that reported 100 cases of driving away reporters at public places, 75 cases of tailing reporters, 16 cases of physical violence against reporters, 45 cases of threatening interviewees and 23 cases of calling in reporters for questioning.<sup>70</sup>

The persecution of conscientious reporters also includes the threat of dismissal, e.g. the recent dissolution of *Zhongguo Jingji Shibao* 中国经济时报 [China Economic Times]'s special reports department and the sacking of its head Wang Keqin 王克勤 who has been dubbed "China's number one dark-side exposing (*jiehei* 揭黑) reporter" with his track record of being the journalist who brought to the public's attention the notorious cases of the Lanzhou 兰州 securities black market, Beijing taxi monopoly scandal, Dingzhou 定州's horrific homicide, Shanxi's vaccine scandal, the Li Gang 李刚 case, etc.<sup>71</sup> Another reporter, Qi Chonghuai 齐崇淮, who revealed official corruption in the case of the ultra-luxurious government complex in Shandong Province's Tengzhou 滕州 City, was thrown into jail in 2007. Upon his release in September 2011, the court sentenced him to another 9 years based on "missing charges" (*louzui* 漏罪).<sup>72</sup>

On the other hand, in its annual global list of government leaders accused of suppressing press freedom issued on 3rd May 2011, Reporters Sans Frontiers included Chinese president Hu Jintao as one of these “Predators of Press” (“politicians, government officials, religious leaders, militias and criminal organisations that cannot stand the press, treat it as an enemy and directly attack journalists”), citing the secret arrest and disappearance of over 30 dissidents, lawyers and rights-defending (*weiquan* 维权) activists this year so far by April/May 2011.<sup>73</sup> In fact, in trying to control the power of the pen by drawing blood with their swords, these predators’ official policy towards dissent could be chillingly Orwellian, as related in Poole (2006: 203): “In June 2005, users of Microsoft’s newly launched Chinese weblog service were banned from using words and phrases such as ‘democracy’ or ‘democratic movement’: attempts to type these terms invoked an error message that read: ‘This item contains forbidden speech.’” The attempt by the Chinese government in 2009 to enforce the compulsory installation of a “*lǜbā* 绿坝” (Green Dam)<sup>74</sup> Internet filtering software was widely interpreted to be yet another similar assault on dissent in cyberspace.<sup>75</sup> The list of forbidden words on the Internet has been growing lately, covering terms that could be even merely remotely related to dissent, including ludicrously *moli* 茉莉 [jasmine], *pangzi* 胖子 [fatty – nickname of the persecuted artist Ai Weiwei 艾未未], etc.<sup>76</sup>

## 6. Structure and Agency

There is a tide in the affairs of men / Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune; / Omitted, all the voyage of their life / Is bound in shallows and in miseries.

– William Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar*, Act IV, Scene III

Causes of social changes can usually be categorized into three groups, viz. the economic, the political and the cultural factors. Economic factors, especially the impacts of industrial capitalism, form the core of the Marxist approach to social changes. Such Marxist emphasis on economic factors, whether for ideological reasons or for the convenience of power maintenance, still forms the basis of the Chinese Communist Party’s fundamental definition of human rights as the people’s rights to be fed, to be sheltered, to be educated and to be employed. Nevertheless, straying from this orthodox Marxist tenet is the neo-Marxist expansion of sources of social contradictions, which are inherent in social structures, to the political, religious, ethnic and ideological factors of conflicts and also the importance of culture not least as a marker for political mobilization. Adapting Buckley (1967: 58–59)’s concepts of morphostasis referring to “those processes in complex system-environment exchanges that

tend to preserve or maintain a system's given form, organization or state" and morphogenesis referring to "those processes which tend to elaborate or change a system's given form, structure or state", Archer (1995), on the other hand, posited that humanity had entered the stage of the morphogenetic society and spoke of the central importance of the role of the human agency that generates both the social segments' morphostatic and morphogenetic relationships which, in turn, are not able to exert causal powers without working through human agents.

Nevertheless, the cautious but pragmatic approach to reform, whether economic or political, of post-Mao Zedong 毛泽东 and post-Deng Xiaoping 邓小平 China seems to reflect the neo-Marxist view that total system or revolutionary change is not inevitable and a stalemate or Reeler (2007)'s cold stuckness could be the preferred outcome of social conflicts – the stance of "stability above all else" (*wending yadao yiqie* 稳定压倒一切) which reaffirms dominance maintained by gradualism in reform and piecemeal changes. Pluralized conflicts, one of the possible major patterns of conflicts from the point of view of neo-Marxists, help in such maintenance of dominance, characterized by the distinctive feature of "fragmentation and absence of a feeling of commonality" of current Chinese extra-Party politics (Benton, 2010: 322), partly as a result of the relentless crackdown on generalist dissent that the CCP regime perceived as most threatening, which has recently intriguingly escalated into a wider crackdown on civil right defenders and whistle blowers.

In addition to those mentioned in the previous section, also noteworthy is the sentencing of dissident Xie Changfa 谢长发 to 13-year imprisonment for his involvement in organizing the China Democracy Party since 1998, which came after the conviction of the civil rights activists Huang Qi 黄琦, Tan Zuoren 谭作人 and Guo Quan 郭泉, who voiced out on the alleged school building construction scandal exposed by the 2008 Sichuan earthquake that resulted in a huge number of student casualties due to the collapse of school buildings.<sup>77</sup> The epitome of the prisoners of conscience at the moment, as mentioned earlier, is of course Liu Xiaobo, the key founder of Charter 08, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize on 8th October 2010, in a year with a large number of the nominees for the prize being persecuted Chinese dissidents and civil rights activists including prominent figures like Wei Jingsheng 魏京生, Gao Zhisheng, Chen Guangcheng and Hu Jia.

The widening of persecution of civil rights lawyers and activists has seen the arrest or "disappearance" of 30 to 50 people in the first five months of 2011, including the arrest of civil rights activist and artist Ai Weiwei, and the continued persecution of the "melamine-contaminated baby milk scandal" activist Zhao Lianhai 赵连海 whose son was among the hundreds

of thousands of infant victims of the 2008 scandal.<sup>78</sup> After being put under house arrest in 2005 following his involvement in the legal cases of women's forced abortion and sterilization in the prefecture-level city of Linyi 临沂 in Shandong Province, the blind rights-defending lawyer and activist Chen Guangcheng was formally charged in 2006 with the destruction of public property and traffic disruption and sentenced to four years and three months in prison. Though he was released on 9th September 2010, he and his family have since been under tight house arrest and complete seclusion. After the publicizing of an image recording he secretly made of his house arrest ordeal, Chen and his wife Yuan Weijing 袁伟静 were cruelly beaten up by seventy-odd people who broke into their house on 18th February 2011, according to a letter sent out by Yuan. The terrorizing and intimidation continued, she said, with their windows being sealed up with iron sheets on 3rd March, television antenna broken on 7th, and the intrusion of forty-odd people who took away their computer and certain handwritten materials.<sup>79</sup> According to another *weiquan* activist Liu Shasha 刘沙沙, Cheng Guangcheng's 6-year-old daughter Chen Kesi 陈克斯 was denied her right to schooling because of her parents' house arrest although she had reached the school age.<sup>80</sup>

In the case of Ai Weiwei, he was arrested on 3rd April 2011 and accused by the official media of having committed economic crime and tax evasion. Li Fangping 李方平, the civil rights lawyer who had defended Ai Weiwei and Zhao Lianhai, was taken away on 29 April. He was released on 4th May, the day another civil rights lawyer Li Xiongbing 黎雄兵 disappeared.<sup>81</sup> Four staff members of Ai's studio also disappeared on 11th April. Ai was released on bail on 22nd June with the condition that he must not talk to the media or through twitter or other Internet social group for at least one year. The apparently less brutal treatment towards Ai compared to those meted out to other dissidents could probably be attributed to his "red family" background. His arrest represented a State warning that he had overstepped the line in his investigation into many incidents involving government corruption, such as the melamine-contaminated baby milk scandal, the "tofu dregs" schoolhouse scandal that causes a huge number of schoolchildren casualties during Sichuan's Wenchuan 汶川 earthquake<sup>82</sup> and his vocal support for the persecuted rights-defending dissidents. During his incarceration, Ai was allegedly placed in a windowless room of less than four square metres, and police interrogation had never touched upon the tax evasion issue but on subversion and "jasmine revolution" instead. The police allegedly told him that "you embarrassed the country, the country will embarrass you; this is what you deserve."<sup>83</sup>

However, in comparison with the different waves of almost a century of Chinese dissent, as pointed out by both Benton and Wasserstrom,

today's dissent in China lacks a unifying thread that connects the actions of different disgruntled groups (Wasserstrom, 2009), partly due to the actions of the regime, partly also being "a result of the increasing complexity, differentiation, and individualization of Chinese society, which is no longer monochrome and predictable but as diverse as other contemporary societies, and geographically even more diverse" (Benton, 2010: 322). This increased diversity has inevitably impacted on the increasingly complex structure of the agent-institution interface (see Green's model of social change as applied to the Chinese case – Green, 2008; Yeoh, 2010a: 271, Figure 19) at the core of the circles of social transformation.

Archer's double morphogenesis sees both structure and agency as conjoint products of interaction in which agency is both shaped by and reshapes structure (Archer, 1995; 1996; 2000; 2003). Operating structures and purposely acting human agencies (combinations of acting individuals) in combination forms the praxis and interface of social interaction that effects social change, wherein agencies are both creating and being limited by the structures, exemplified no doubt by the voicing of dissent and the corresponding crackdowns justified by the notion of "stability above all else". However, social control, as ironically seen by Ralf Dahrendorf (1959), could be the broadest basis of social conflicts. In a sense, such coercion to extract conformity is normal, as all social systems exhibit association of roles and statuses that embody power relationships which tend to be institutionalized as authority, sometimes self-perpetuated, with normative rights to dominate.

On the macrosociological level, while conflict is an inevitable part of social life and not necessarily negative as it is the engine for social change from both Marxian and Weberian perspectives, the key question is ultimately who gains at whose expense – the question of equity – and this leads to the actions of the rights-defending activists. Indeed, from the interpretive perspective, social reality is ultimately a construction by people – interactions among people so that patterns and standards of behaviour emerge, how these people – be they the ruling political élite or the increasingly persecuted civil rights lawyers and activists, many of whom being the survivors of the 1989 Beijing massacre, who unlike the also persecuted democracy movement organizers like Liu Xiaobo and Xie Changfa, seek instead "to protect and improve the rights of citizens within China's constitutional constraints and legal framework with minimal political requests" yet not totally apolitical (Hung, 2010: 333-334).

From the perspective of interpretivism, change in the forms of interaction, process and negotiation is primal, while structure a by-product and temporary. In this context, both the pro-democracy and civil rights activists and members of the ruling political élite are human agencies engaged in

the constant creation, negotiation and re-creation of the social order. Within this process of social change there exists a negotiated consensus about what constitutes objective social reality – an outcome of the historical process of symbolic interaction and negotiation that is society as social construction because human agencies, be they State agencies, civil societal groups or organizations, become real only if the human agents believe that they are to be real, and in huge and complex societies with a multitude of contending realities whatever consensus on what constitutes objective social reality is at best partial. This can be seen in the context of interpretive understanding of social action (*verstehen*) – the Weberian focus on human agents' interpretation, definition and shaping by cultural meanings well beyond overt behaviour and events wherein human agents define their social situations, while these definitions influence ensuing actions and interactions and such human interactions entail the negotiation of order, structure and cultural meanings. At the level of the individual human agent, Archer (2003) described the integration of subjective projects and objective circumstances in a viable *modus vivendi* linking structure with agency, through constantly examining one's social contexts, asking and answering oneself in a trial-and-error manner about how one can best realize the concerns that oneself determine, in circumstances that were not one's own choosing (Archer, 2003: 133).

While Archer's theorizing has sometimes been criticized as focusing too much on internal conversation, conceptualized as a causal power that transforms both human agents and society, at the expense of intersubjective communication which is crucial for understanding the morphogenesis of structure through collective action and social movements – her emphasis that “[w]here we humans not reflexive beings there could be no such thing as society” (Archer, 2003: 19) – it could be unfair not to take into consideration the relevance of her theorizing to the latter and the great potential of extracting a theory of collective action from her work. Her “metareflexives” for instance, while – true to her assertion that private life is an essential prerequisite for social life – being idealists seeking self-knowledge and practicing self-critique for self-realization, are also driven by their personal missions to criticize their environment – Habermasian Meadian *wertrationale* social utopians constantly judging themselves and their societies in a critical manner from the point of view of the “generalized other” and the alternate “rational society” (Habermas, 1987, 1992; Mead, 1934), showing concern for social injustice and refusing morphostasis or “cold stuckness” (Reeler, 2007) in the name of some cultural or political ideal or the preference for stability. Mead's “generalized other”, after all, is the “organized community or social group which gives to the individual his unity of self” (Mead, 1934: 154), enabling the human agent to raise questions of justice and rights.



## 7. State as Racketeer

Every Communist must grasp the truth, “Political power grows out of the barrel of a gun.”

Mao Zedong, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, “Problems of War and Strategy”,  
6th November 1938

I told myself that no matter what, I refused to become the General Secretary who mobilized the military to crack down on students.

– Zhao Ziyang (2009a: 29; 2009b: 48; 2009c: 62)

Just a year prior to Mao’s passing, on the other side of the globe in 1975, in Spain which constitutes 85 per cent of the Iberian Peninsula, Generalísimo Francisco Franco y Bahamonde<sup>84</sup> (the *Caudillo*) died. While repeatedly expressing confidence that he would leave Spain *atado, y bien atado* (“tied-up, well tied-up”)<sup>85</sup>, Franco’s death in 1975 was followed within two years by the dismantling of the structure of the whole Franquist regime, and the first free parliamentary elections in over 40 years were held on 15th June 1977. One of the most remarkable developments under the democratic transition had been the political decentralization of the State. Nevertheless, the controversy and confusion over the regional picture and the fear for the loss of Spain’s national identity, as well as the continued attacks by ETA, the Basque separatist group, continued to fuel right-wing discontent, led to a series of conspiracies against the democratic government and culminated in the almost successful military coup of 23rd February 1981. However, the result has not been to roll back reforms but to push the ethnoregional question even more firmly to the top of the political agenda.

Hence, going back to the 1970s, what we are seeing here is that at their respective critical structural junctures three decades ago, in 1975 and 1976, fascist Spain and Marxist-Leninist China embraced different paths of reforms, with post-Franco Spain spurning overnight her fascist-corporatist past and embracing multi-party democracy and federalism, taking the risk of the disappearance of the central State, to hold the country together against potentially separatist ethnoregional conflicts, while post-Mao China has since followed a more cautious path that was to evolve later into an institutionalized relationship between the central State and the localities some would call “selective centralization” (Zheng, 1999).

### 7.1. *From May Fourth to June Fourth to July Fifth*

O ye that love mankind! Ye that dare oppose, not only the tyranny, but the tyrant, stand forth!

– Thomas Paine (1776), *Common Sense*

Across the globe in China, since the demise of Mao, another critical juncture arrived in 1989, with the 100-day peaceful Tiananmen demonstrations and

hunger strikes that received global sympathy probably other than those behind the high walls of Zhongnanhai 中南海 whose only known feedback mechanism for dealing with such “deviation-amplification”<sup>86</sup> that could trigger systemic change was armed repression. These poignant lines from Howard Chapnick’s foreword to *Beijing Spring* (Turnley *et al.*, 1989: 15) speak of June Fourth as a historical milestone:

[...] The martyrs of Tiananmen Square lie silent and still. They spoke for themselves throughout the tumultuous and chaotic weeks of the Beijing Spring of 1989. But now, in the aftermath of repression and intimidation, their symbolic Goddess of Democracy has been shattered, their banners have been removed, and their voices have been silenced [...] We were incredulous spectators as the Chinese students dared to dream what became an impossible dream [...] But certain events are so monumental, so symbolic, so glorious, and speak so eloquently to our highest ideals that they transcend the immediacy of the news. History demands that they be preserved.

Such poignancy results, in Archer (1988)’s explanation, from the disjunction between the system segments’ relations of contradictions and complementarity and those between human agents in terms of conflict and cooperation. Shocking it might have been, it was not surprising that the 1989 Beijing Spring had ended in the tragic Rape of Beijing<sup>87</sup> when the system segments’ relations did not mesh with those of the human agents – the same mismatch that is still manifesting itself today where the political élite in the life-world is adamant in holding ground against the masses’ demand for transformative political change amidst lively debate and consensus on universal values at the general level of the cultural system – thus nipping morphogenesis in the bud, leading to the subsequent protracted morphostasis.

While Spain’s 1981 failed coup had put the decentralization plan into more urgency by highlighting the peril in the management of decentralization, the threat from conservative forces, and the threat from regional reformers and secessionists, the Tiananmen demonstrations had instead ended in the spill of innocent blood and arrested the maturing of the political system with the purge of Zhao Ziyang 赵紫阳, the arrest of Bao Tong 鲍彤 and the exile of other chief reformists and intellectuals who advocated democratization such as Yan Jiaqi 严家其 and Fang Lizhi 方励之 and the student leaders in the forefront of the mass protest.

Aspects of political reform have since been either rolled back or stalled. In view of the close link between political decentralization and democratization,<sup>88</sup> the tragic end of the Tiananmen protests and democracy movement of June 1989 was a disaster for democratic pluralist development and ethnoregional accommodation. The post-June Fourth robust, even miraculous, economic growth has been used time and again rather successfully by the CCP for the *ex post* justification of the Tiananmen crackdown of 1989,

that the brutal crackdown had been necessary to preserve China's stability and economic progress, but if the blood-chilling words attributed to Deng Xiaoping<sup>89</sup> – that it was worth killing 20 *wan* 万 (i.e. 200 thousand) people to ensure 20 years of stability for China – in ordering the brutal crackdown of June 1989 were truly his, then the continuing, even recently escalating, social unrest – including those more alarming incidents with ethnic or ethnoregional flavour – that culminated in Xinjiang's July Fifth deadly riots of 2009, just a month past that year's 20th anniversary of the Beijing<sup>90</sup> massacre, look somehow like an omen that time might be running out. The student movement which snowballed into social protests of unprecedented scale is in many ways a return of May Fourth. While May Fourth of 1919 had eventually led to the triumph of Maoism-Leninism which in a way hijacked the early socialism of Chen Tu-hsiu (Chen Duxiu) 陳獨秀<sup>91</sup>, the violent suppression of the 1989 mass protests represented a prelude to the subsequent hijacking of the Hu Yaobang-Zhao Ziyang administration's initiative for politico-economic liberalization<sup>92</sup> by the strengthening one-party authoritarian State corporatism preferred by Deng Xiaoping who once and again felt wary of and threatened by his protégés' "bourgeois liberalism". The conservative backlash had since worsened the uneasy coexistence of a highly decentralized economic structure with a highly centralized intolerant political regime which has, among other ramifications, stalled the more rational accommodation of ethnic and ethnoregional aspirations and precipitated the horrific events of 14th March 2008 and 5th July 2009.

Yet, the 1989 Beijing massacre could be seen as a wake-up call for the CCP to embark rigorously on a path of continuing economic reform while rolling back the Hu Yaobang-Zhao Ziyang era of limited politico-cultural liberalization (a prominent symbol being the *He Shang* 河殤 [river elegy] documentary<sup>93</sup>) and the subsequent collapse of Communist Party rule in USSR and Eastern Europe from the end of 1989 to early 1990<sup>94</sup> had seemed to reaffirm the correctness of such a decision to crack down on the part of the CCP to ensure the survival of its one-party rule. June Fourth could also be seen as a catalyst for the single-minded determination to deliver on the economic front after Deng Xiaoping's "southern tour" (*nanxun* 南巡) later in 1992 to reaffirm the Party's policy of moving forward with economic reform and liberalization, coupled with more determined repression of political dissent. Nevertheless, as Bao (2009) noted:

There are people who said that the crackdown has led to prosperity. What I know is: economic reform created prosperity. It is the people who have, with market economy, crushed the yoke of Mao Zedong to create prosperity. Now there are people who concluded that prosperity is the output of crackdown. Facing the global economic crisis, I do not know whether they are preparing to introduce the experience of crackdown to save the world economy. There

are people who applaud that a muzzled China – a China in Total Silence – has leapt forward to become the world's second largest economic entity – just after the United States; I believe this is true. Under the brutal rule of Kublai Khan, China has so early already been the prosperous paradise witnessed by Marco Polo [...] June Fourth opened up a new phase of Total Silence. After Deng Xiaoping's southern tour, the China in Total Silence reiterated economic reform and wealth redistribution. But who are the beneficiaries of such redistribution in a China in Total Silence?<sup>95</sup>

Such worries are not unfounded. There is indeed little unique for a politically repressive country to achieve economic miracles. Many authoritarian and neo-authoritarian countries have done it before, such as Chiang Kai-shek 蔣介石's Taiwan and Park Chung-hee 박정희 / 朴正熙's South Korea, or in a way even Augusto Pinochet's Chile and Soeharto's Indonesia. In fact, many such countries are among the models CCP's China, in its search for a way forward after 1989, found attractive to consider for emulation.

This year 2011 is the 22nd anniversary of June Fourth. It is also the 92nd anniversary of May Fourth. There are indeed many similarities between May Fourth of 1919 and June Fourth seventy years later – the passion for social reform and national rejuvenation, the resentment against contemporary socio-politico-economic injustice, the call for democracy, science, human rights and modernization (in 1989 very much symbolized by the hugely popular *He Shang* documentary), the forlorn challenge against the overwhelming power of a ruthless State. Like May Fourth of 1919 which, while inclusive of the liberal tradition, eventually turned Chinese intellectuals away from Western liberalism to Bolshevism, planted the seeds of Mao's ascending the Tiananmen on 1st October 1949<sup>96</sup> and of the contradictions between national rejuvenation, modernization and radicalism, June Fourth of 1989<sup>97</sup>, which happened to coincide with the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution, 70th anniversary of the May Fourth Movement and 40th anniversary of Chinese Communist Party rule, in a way also sowed the seeds of escalating internal contradictions and tension in subsequent policy orientation.

Even not seen in ethnic and ethnoterritorial terms, such social contradictions have manifested themselves in the alarmingly widening income gap, deteriorating socioeconomic inequalities and proliferating social unrest. The State's neurosis towards the meaning of May Fourth, which was supposed to be a national pride, and its link to the spirit of June Fourth, for instance, was manifest in the quiet passing of the recent 92nd anniversary of the May Fourth movement in Beijing and Peking University, the birthplace of the movement. Besides the suppression of freethought and dissent and the ubiquitous "thought police" on campus, Peking University's economics professor Xia Yeliang 夏业良 attributed the dire atmosphere to the government's denial of the universal value of liberal democracy and freedom of expression and

political choice.<sup>98</sup> In contrast with the students who participated and led the 1989 democracy movement who dared to turn ideals into action, according to Professor Ye, today's students tend to heed their parents' advice to beware of the political minefield given the memory of the 1989 Beijing massacre and the subsequent two decades of relentless repression on dissidents, and increasingly, even civil rights activists and lawyers, which has been seen to be deteriorating recently partly due to the CCP regime's fear of the spread of the tantalizing "jasmine revolutions" from the Arab North Africa and West Asia into this East Asian giant.

However, in the interplay between the State and the civil society, much like what Kristensen's law in public choice theories postulates, the negotiation between human agencies as stated earlier in the previous section tends to be asymmetrical. In entrenching and expanding its power, the ruling regime as a rule would resort to exploit such power asymmetry not only by the overt repression of dissent in the preservation of stability as an ongoing stalemate – one of the possible results of social conflicts from the neo-Marxist perspective – but also by forging and re-forging alliances with societal groups based on common interest and the co-optation of the societal élite including segments of the intelligentsia. All these, of course, depend on the State's ability to monopolize the concentrated means of coercion. In this, China is not unique, as Charles Tilly observed:

At least for the European experience of the past few centuries, a portrait of war makers and state makers as coercive and self-seeking entrepreneurs bears a far greater resemblance to the facts than do its chief alternatives: the idea of a social contract, the idea of an open market in which operators of armies and states offer services to willing consumers, the idea of a society whose shared norms and expectations call forth a certain kind of government.

(Tilly, 1985: 169)

While that brings to mind Thomas Paine's iconoclastic dictum that "government even in its best state is but a necessary evil; in its worst state an intolerable one"<sup>99</sup>, Tilly noted that apologists for a government usually argued that the government offered protection against local and external violence and these apologists called people who complained about the price of protection "anarchists", "subversives", or both at once. Tilly found an analogy of such a government with a racketeer:

But consider the definition of a racketeer as someone who creates a threat and then charges for its reduction. Governments' provision of protection, by this standard, often qualifies as racketeering. To the extent that the threats against which a given government protects its citizens are imaginary or are consequences of its own activities, the government has organized a protection racket. Since governments themselves commonly simulate, stimulate, or even fabricate threats of external war and since the repressive

and extractive activities of governments often constitute the largest current threats to the livelihoods of their own citizens, many governments operate in essentially the same ways as racketeers.

(Tilly, 1985: 171)

Such racketeer governments basically perpetuate their power through violence, in one sense or another:

Back to Machiavelli and Hobbes [...] political observers have recognized that, whatever else they do, governments organize and, wherever possible, monopolize violence. It matters little whether we take violence in a narrow sense, such as damage to persons and objects, or in a broad sense, such as violation of people's desires and interests; by either criterion, governments stand out from other organizations by their tendency to monopolize the concentrated means of violence.

(ibid.)

## 7.2. *From Megaghost to Megastar: A Party Reborn?*

The mismatch between the system segments' relations and those of the human agencies, coupled with power asymmetry and one-sided monopoly of violence, gives rise to a situation in which social structural stratification leads to even involuntarily placed agents being transformed into social actors during the process of transforming the structural conditions affecting them – Archer (1988)'s double morphogenesis – while they are endeavouring to realize their undertakings and/or to guard their vested interests, as poignantly struck home in the following diatribe by the observing media against the perpetrator of the June 1989 Beijing massacre:

Not only is Peking a nightmare streetscape awash in atrocity and anguish; the nation at large has become a haunted land. This howling, lurching megaghost is the Chinese Communist Party. In one staggeringly brutal stroke, it shot itself through the heart. It will not recover. A regime that professes itself to be the distillation of popular will has turned on the Chinese people, committing the ultimate sacrilege of eating its own children. Hundreds of China's brightest, most idealistic sons and daughters, their movement commanding wide public sympathy, were nakedly sacrificed to the cause of preserving an élite.

(*Asiaweek*, 16th June 1989, p. 16)

While *Asiaweek* in its 16th June 1989 editorial "The Rape of Peking" lamented a Goya-esque landscape, these lines seem today, by hindsight, a gross underestimation of CCP's resiliency and the effectiveness of authoritarian power, and the importance of the constraints and enablements that depends objectively on the relative social position of the human agents and subjectively on the agents' projects which to a certain extent being adjusted

to possibilities through Bourdieu's "causality of the probable" (Bourdieu, 1974), given the stark asymmetry in power relations and one-sided monopoly of violence.

Meanwhile, building upon the foundation set by the Hu-Zhao administration's audacious reformist programmes, Deng Xiaoping moved forward from where his purged former protégés have left by reinvigorating the post-Tiananmen chilling politico-economic milieu through his *nanxun* in 1992, culminating lately in China first superseding Germany to become the world's third largest economy in early 2008, ranked only after the United States of America and Japan, and finally superseding Japan in mid-2010.<sup>100</sup>

According to Wang Qinfeng 王秦丰, the deputy head of CCP's Central Committee Organization Department (中共中央组织部), from the 4.48 million party member in 1949 at the founding of PRC, the Chinese Communist Party has grown to comprise over 80 million members by the end of 2010, of whom one quarter were below 35 years old. In fact, about 80 per cent of those who applied to join the party in 2010 were below 35 years old, with the party members with university or other high academic qualifications continuing to increase in number.<sup>101</sup> CCP has also been intensively recruiting professionals in private enterprises as party members. For instance, of the 200 employees of the Beijing company Hengtai Shida 恒泰实达 about 10 per cent, mainly from the middle and higher echelons, are now CCP members.<sup>102</sup> On the other hand, Chen Xiqing 陈喜庆, the deputy head of CCP's Central Committee United Front Department (中共中央统战部), declared at a recent press conference that China's "multi-party" system was already perfect, hence there was no need to establish new political parties.<sup>103</sup> The CCP, according to Chen, has been absorbing the workers, peasants, soldiers as well as members of the intelligentsia as party members, while the eight existing "democratic parties" (*minzhu dangpai* 民主党派) are focusing mainly on recruiting people from the middle and upper social strata, including those in the fields of technology, culture and sports, as their party members. In China's so-called "multi-party cooperation" (*duodang hezuo* 多党合作) system, these "democratic parties" are neither "non-ruling parties" (*zaiyedang* 在野党) nor "opposition parties" (*fanduidang* 反对党), but "participating parties" (*canzhengdang* 参政党). Besides that, according to Chen, there are also "party-less" (*wu dangpai* 无党派) people in the system, comprising those who are not members of these nine political parties.

However, nomination of independent candidates for the county- and village-level elections this year (2011) has apparently been blocked on the ground that the nomination of such independent candidates has no legal basis, while official media are accusing these independent candidates as learning from the Western opposition, creating confrontation, being irresponsible and

causing political hazards in China's society. These independent candidates are also warned not to touch the government's "red line".<sup>104</sup> According to China's electoral law, only the "official representative candidates" are legal candidates for the county and village elections, being nominated and recommended by the political parties, civil organizations and the electorate; hence, these "independent" candidates are considered illegal. For instance, a female *xiagang* worker in Jiangxi Province, Liu Ping 刘萍, was placed under tight police surveillance after she declared her intention to stand in Xinyu 新余 City's Yushui 渝水 District elections. A labour-rights activist, Liu has been arrested before for her *shangfang-weiquan* 上访维权<sup>105</sup> activity and believed that she would be arrested again in the government's attempt to stop her from standing in the coming elections.<sup>106</sup>

Hence, while many authors inside and outside China have been lauding the country's "grassroots democratization" and intra-Party reforms as pointing to a promising path of de-authoritarian evolvement, the perception that China is moving out from the "politically closed authoritarian" category of regime type (see taxonomy in Diamond, 2002: 30-31, Table 2) could prove to be as misleadingly whimsical as it is empirical unfounded. Furthermore, past record of mismanagement and repressive, often violent, response to dissent, including the excesses during the Cultural Revolution both in China proper and in the ethnic regions like Tibet and Xinjiang, and the June Fourth atrocities, may not be encouraging for many, as a dissident astrophysicist, exiled after the 1989 Beijing massacre, ruminated:

[...] changes are not devoid of suffering. China has again shed fresh blood, blood which testifies to an oft-proved truth:

- Without respect for human rights, there will be resorting to violence;
- Without tolerance and pluralism, there will be resorting to prison;
- Without democratic checks and balances, there will be resorting to armed coercion.

China's history has long since proven, and continues to prove, that using violence and imprisonment and armed coercion to enforce upon a nation a single belief, a single point of view, a single superstition, will only lead to instability, poverty, and backwardness.

(Fang, 1991: 259)<sup>107</sup>

## 8. Élite as Seemers

Hence shall we see, / If power change purpose, what our seemers be.

– William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*, Act I, Scene IV

And as to you, Sir, treacherous in private friendship (for so you have been to me, and that in the day of danger) and a hypocrite in public life, the



world will be puzzled to decide whether you are an apostate or an imposter; whether you have abandoned good principles, or whether you ever had any.

– Thomas Paine, letter to George Washington, 1796<sup>108</sup>

While not denying that much progress is required before China turns democratic, Bo (2010) argued against the accusation that the CCP's rule is illegitimate:

It is taken for granted in the Western media and academe that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has an issue of political legitimacy. Since China scored very low on a series of widely used international indexes on political openness and governance, it is claimed, the CCP's rule is in a serious legitimacy crisis [...] It is wrong to evaluate the legitimacy of the CCP rule by relying solely on "expert" opinions of the Western academia and media because they are in no position to judge whether the CCP has right to rule or not. To assess the legitimacy of any political regime, we need to see whether such a regime is receptive to the governed. From this perspective, the CCP has no legitimacy crisis. It has been recognized as legitimate internationally as well as by the people of China.

(Bo, 2010: 102, 117)

Yet, according to Arthur Stinchcombe, legitimacy depends rather little on abstract principle or assent of the governed for the "person *over whom power is exercised* is not usually as important as *other power-holders*" (Stinchcombe, 1968: 150, italics in the original)<sup>109</sup> the probability of whose confirmation of the decisions of a given authority constitutes the latter's legitimacy, and these other authorities, as Tilly commented,

[...] are much more likely to confirm the decisions of a challenged authority that controls substantial force; not only fear of retaliation, but also desire to maintain a stable environment recommend that general rule. The rule underscores the importance of the authority's monopoly of force. A tendency to monopolize the means of violence makes a government's claim to provide protection, in either the comforting or the ominous sense of the word, more credible and more difficult to resist.

(Tilly, 1985: 171-172)

It is in this way that these "other power-holders", be they societal pressure groups, professionals, or academics and the intelligentsia, "have been co-opted into the decision-making process, rewarded with perks and privileges, and are no longer available as a source of inspiration [for the dissident activists ...] retreating from 'politically engaged and intellectually oppositional topics' to inquiries reconcilable with the prevailing order and designed to legitimate the hegemonic order" (Benton, 2010: 321-322)<sup>110</sup> of a regime claiming credit for the economic successes that brought along heightened international stature

and diplomatic prowess and propounding existing stability as the key to continued economic prosperity which itself being the unfailing characteristic of the Chinese and Chinese diaspora worldwide – achievement which could have come naturally for the people once the Maoist yoke, both in the forms of the suppression of free entrepreneurial spirit and the political horrors, was lifted by the same regime that had foisted that yoke upon the Chinese people for three decades since 1949.

With the carrot-and-stick approach to maintain its survival, the once-brutal-dictatorship-turned-benevolent-*dictablanda* (à la O'Donnell and Schmitter, 1986) has managed to preserve the *status quo* of its own rule as well as the interests of the “other power-holders” by both selling the credit it claimed on behalf the industrious, enterprising and persevering masses whose newly freed entrepreneurial spirit, long-recognized in the communities of their brethren worldwide, resulted from the Party's repudiation of the Maoist policies, has doubtlessly led to the country's economic success during the economic reform decades since 1979, as well as extracting the support of these “other power-holders” who are willing to abdicate their opportunity to rule in exchange for other kinds of protection by the ensuing strong State run by the present regime (Stepan, 1985), in a *faute de mieux* deal much akin to Karl Marx's description of the Bonapartist regime in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon* (1852). Marx's classic analysis of Bonapartism as a basis of State autonomy rests mainly in the sharing of common interests between the State and the dominant group, which in the case of contemporary China, the ruling CCP regime and the dominant social élite and groups whose inability to overcome the present State's monopoly of violence to force a regime change has given the Party-State the opportunity to use the leverage gained both to preserve the *status quo* and to propound its claim as the protector of stability and prosperity in exchange for the acceptance of its legitimacy, for even when “a government's use of force imposes a large cost, some people may well decide that the government's other services outbalance the costs of acceding to its monopoly of violence” (Tilly, 1985: 172), though it could turn out to be a Faustian bargain that these social élite and groups might live to rue. In the stylized representation in Yeoh (2010a: 254, Figure 8), proscription of even the slightest manifestation of dissent against the one-party rule has managed to contain societal political action to the routine intra-party politics at the far bottom right-hand corner, despite the sporadic outbursts of people power usually stemming from localized grievances which have always been quickly suppressed. Amidst all this, individual political actors are playing a central role in giving existence to the obduracy of the system, for the causal powers of systems and structures cannot exist without the mediation through the human agency, as Archer (2003) admitted despite her rejection of the theorem of the duality of agency and structure.

“Infidelity,” said Thomas Paine, “does not consist in believing, or in disbelieving, it consists in professing to believe what one does not believe.”<sup>111</sup> Among members of the political élite, without the pressures from emerging critical junctures (Katznelson, 1971), critical decisions like those coming from Zhao Ziyang and Deng Xiaoping in 1989 are no longer forthcoming, and political decision-makers tend to lapse, for career security, into the safe zone behind the veil of ignorance – postponing critical decisions on the pretext of maintaining stability in the hope that problems would not come to a head so soon or would fade into the background with increasing prosperity – and come to be political seemers characterized by rhetoric barrages of nationalistic rhapsodies and Poolean unspeak<sup>112</sup>. As a case in point, Premier Wen Jiabao 温家宝 is increasingly being accused by the disillusioned masses of not matching any action to his frequent verbal outburst advocating political reform the details of which have been noted by observers to be much similar to those advocated in Charter 08 which landed its proponent Liu Xiaobo with an 11-year imprisonment.<sup>113</sup>

Postponing critical decisions on the last leg of reform – that in the political sphere – could only be postponing the inevitable and in fact accentuating the existing social contradictions, for both the speed and volatility brought about by the country’s breakneck economic transformation under increasing morphogenesis are making whatever State-sanctioned system with the bottom line of one-party rule short-lived in viability when all State-guided *modi vivendi* as such could be at best *pro tem*. The inability to face up to the rapidly changing reality and shifting social context and keep their meta-reflexivity (Archer, 1995) constantly on call to realistically assess their existing *modus vivendi* and to be receptive to a transformative change (Yeoh, 2010a: 285, Figure 21) has trapped the ruling élite, for political survival, in the unwavering upholding of a prolonged stage of morphostasis, being the agency and most powerful institution that is best positioned to block or promote (Yeoh, 2010a: 271-272, Figure 19) the path of morphogenesis, which according to Archer (1995), like morphostasis, is both generated and only exerting causal powers by working through social agents.

Distinctively, Archer’s critical realism grants causal powers to the human agency that are indeducible from or irreducible to the causal powers of society (Archer, 2000). Such endowment of causal powers must be crucial for the Bourdieuvian human agents who, involuntarily occupying social positions that define their life-chances, upon gaining cognizance of their class members’ common interests, are being transformed into Tourainean corporate agents who now set out as social actors to transform society, personalizing the latter as per their ultimate concerns (Bourdieu, 1974; Touraine, 1969, 1973, 1978). It is in this context that, according to Archer, the existing system itself would shape the life-world practices geared towards reproducing, reshaping or

transmuting the system, whose result, not really incompatible with Deng's "river-crossing" dictum<sup>114</sup> or Mao's "perpetual revolution", is poised to be contested and modified in the subsequent phase of the series of endless morphogenetic cycles of sociopolitical and sociocultural interaction and systemic conditioning and elaboration.

The political reform much hoped for by China watchers when Hu Jintao 胡锦涛 and Wen Jiabao – both being former colleagues and subordinates of the former reformist premier Zhao Ziyang who was disgraced in 1989 in a power struggle with hardliner Li Peng 李鹏 who subsequently executed Deng Xiaoping's decision for a brutal crackdown on the Beijing-Tiananmen protesters – took over the presidency and premiership respectively has never materialized. Their absence at the memorial service for Zhao, "the conscience of China" placed under house arrest for sixteen long years for his refusal to repent his decision to oppose the 1989 Beijing-Tiananmen crackdown and to urge for the accommodation of the hunger-striking students' demands, when he passed away in 2005 has added to the doubt regarding the degree of their political power in the central politburo.<sup>115</sup> The utter cold-heartedness Wen Jiabao exhibited towards the plight of Zhao Ziyang has long puzzled observers of Chinese politics and Zhao's family and relatives have long found chilling. "Take from the mine the coldest, hardest stone, / It needs no fashion: it is Washington. / But if you chisel, let the stroke be rude, / And on his heart engrave – Ingratitude", said Thomas Paine in his unpublished epitaph for George Washington<sup>116</sup>. While Washington's betrayal of Paine, the little known father of both the French and American revolutions, during the latter's incarceration in Paris waiting to be guillotined was a political necessity given Paine's open espousal of religious unorthodoxy, the 1796's American presidential elections, as well as America's foreign policy turnabout, the same necessity for political survival could probably explain much the behaviour of Wen who survived through both purges of Hu Yaobang 胡耀邦 and Zhao Ziyang. Political seemers they may both be, both Washington and Wen have indeed acted with good political sense as rational human agents interfacing with harsh political realities of their times. Nevertheless, revelations by political analysts based on internal Party sources have shown that, as in the case of Wen Jiabao, the personal allegiance and political orientation of individual political players who were highly visible during those critical junctures like June 1989 might have been greatly misread (see, e.g., Liu, 2010).

The real "ruminating self" that intervenes in between the field and the habitus (*à la* Bourdieu, 1990, 2008) through those soul-trying months of passion and anguish at that critical juncture in 1989 and in the aftermath of the massacre, which constitutes the intercessor that connects the structure's causal powers to agency, may be fully understood only by the particular

human agents themselves whose existential projects that they construct *in foro interno* upon which the actuation of social structures' causal powers through constraints and enablements is contingent (Archer, 2003). It is in this context that human agents act to mediate their own social conditionings as well as effectuate the reproduction or transformation of society. "It is not an accident that Premier Wen Jiabao once called himself 'grandpa Wen' – *Wen yeye* [温爷爷] – in front of the people", noted Hung (2011). In a sense, the role of Wen, long cultivated as the loving grand patriarch who is at every scene of disaster to offer moral care for his "children", is orchestrated to be an on-site projection of the central Party-State as the modern successor of the caring benevolent emperor who was always there to *zuozhu* 做主 (do justice) for his downtrodden subjects and punish his abusive officials, in a system that survives till today in the form of *shangfang* 上访 (travelling to the capital for petitioning) by the abused people suffering in the hands of corrupt local officials. Such an image is crucial to the survival of the Party-State, as any self-seeking dynasty-builder has long been acquainted with, for the mandate of heaven would be lost if that image is shattered – ever since Mencius (Meng Zi 孟子) emphasized two thousand three hundred years ago the people's satisfaction as an indicator of a ruler's moral right to power, and justified the overthrow of an unworthy ruler<sup>117</sup>.

The ultimate project of a self-seeking State is also manifest in the single-mindedness in pursuing greater economic prosperity, sometimes dubbed "GDPism"<sup>118</sup>, a crazed quest that is increasingly unfolding in recent years to be at a terrible social cost, epitomized recently by the horrible train mishap in Wenzhou 温州 on 23rd July 2011 – the very Wenzhou that has long found its place in modern Chinese history in the toponym of the "Wenzhou model". The scandalousness of the mishap lies neither in the derailment itself, which is not an uncommon phenomenon in China, nor the scale of the human casualties, nor the unfolding or imminent clampdown on media reportage and civil rights activists and lawyers which has been quite a routine from the Sichuan earthquake's "tofu dregs" school-house scandal to the Sanlu 三鹿 milk contamination disaster, but rather in the scale of the disregard for the dignity of human life. However, the uniqueness of this event, the unusual uproar it has led to stems from the open urban setting of the occurrence that renders surreptitiousness of scandalous actions impossible, unlike, for instance, the case of a similar mishap in Jiangxi on 23rd May 2010 in which the similarly alleged immediate destruction of train wreckage with utter disregard for the victims trapped therein, whom the authorities had hurriedly presumed dead, had also been carried out both to avoid publicity and to speed up the return to normal operation. In the Jiangxi case, the efficient returning the rail segment where the mishap had occurred to operation took even a shorter space of time – merely 16 hours compared to Wenzhou's 34 hours'

duration which is already considered reckless by international standard in the handling of such disasters.<sup>119</sup> Wen Jiabao's late appearance in Wenzhou six days after the mishap, while being jeered at by some disbelieving his illness excuse<sup>120</sup> and rationalized by others in terms of the power struggle between the Hu-Wen and Jiang Zemin 江泽民 factions<sup>121</sup>, had followed the now routine format of Wen showing on-site the caring, human face of the Party-State, while the latter began to clamp down on media coverage and social activism stemmed from the incident. Wen's pronouncements at the site of the disaster are apparently, as have become routine in the past calamities, to project the impression of a benevolent central court ruling an impossibly vast country, struggling to keep a rein on the sometimes wayward, corrupt and uncaring local officials.

Nevertheless, as a paramount figure within the gargantuan Party-military-industrial complex that has metamorphosed during the reform years into an incredible modern Leviathan<sup>122</sup> whose State-capital-collusion reach has since permeated into every corner of the Chinese society, Wen's routine calamity-site pronouncements tend to sound hollow if not pseud. After all, while the perpetuation of one-party rule depends upon the monopoly of violence and ruthless suppression of dissent ever since the June 1989 massacre, the legitimacy of the rule ultimately lies in the ability to maintain the miraculous GDP growth that has brought the country from poverty to prosperity, catapulted the nation to the second place in the world in economic size and given back the Chinese people, whether they be the *Han-jen* 漢人 in the north, *T'ang-jen* 唐人 in the south or the worldwide Chinese diaspora, the long-lost pride, at least in material terms, in the nostalgia for the formidable Han and T'ang dynasties which have been reduced by the early part of the 20th Century to the shameful fate of the "sick man of Asia" and the *bainian guochi* 百年國耻 (hundred years of national humiliation), in a partial redemption for the unspeakable atrocities committed by the Party during the Mao years. Being a political seemer, while riding the waves of the miraculous economic performance that its reborn self has unleashed among the long-suffering Chinese people by lifting the Maoist yoke, the Party has demanded the same gratefulness and reverence long demanded by ancient imperial China's Sons of Heaven for the very economic prosperity that the newly freed, long-suppressed Chinese entrepreneurial spirit has brought to fruition with incredible speed and *geist*.

Nevertheless, a seemer as it is, the Party's ultimate concern is never disguised in the pronouncements of its leaders in party congresses, namely the perpetuation of the anachronistic one-party rule, while rejecting the "bourgeois liberal" practices of multi-party elections and *trias politica* separation of powers, supported by its continued ability to deliver on the economic front as well as to curb social ills resulted from economic

transformation including the rampant corruption and increasing income inequality before they lead to uncontrollable, large-scale system-threatening social protests. This is supported by the ruthless suppression of dissent and nipping any sign of “deviation-amplification” in the bud before it could take the first step to trigger systemic change, all under the façade of territorial unity, political stability and a “harmonious society” (*hexie shehui* 和谐社会), the key conceptual cornerstone since the Sixth Plenary Session of the 16th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in October 2006 passed the “Resolution on Major Issues Regarding the Building of a Harmonious Socialist Society” (关于构建社会主义和谐社会若干重大问题的决定).

While rumours in cyberspace that the order for the alleged Wenzhou cover-up attempt immediately after the derailment had in fact come from the central State at a level beyond the Ministry of Railways could probably never be confirmed or refuted in a governing environment of lies and deceptions, the central Party-State’s paramount priority of maintaining a “harmonious society” and the “stability above all else” prime directive would have had a primary impact on local-tier decision-makers’ policy choices. Take the case of the famous Weng’an incident of 2008 that shocked the nation, when tens of thousands of people walked the streets of Weng’an, Guizhou Province, on 28th June 2008, attacking police and burning law enforcement vehicles and government offices after the suspicious death of a beautiful young schoolgirl Li Shufen 李树芬, discovered at 1 a.m. of 22nd June 2008 drowned at the Daan Bridge 大堰桥 of the Ximen River 西门河. Three persons were present at the scene: Li’s female schoolmate Wang Jiao 王娇 and two male brick factory workers Chen Guangquan 陈光权 and Liu Yanchao 刘言超. Li’s family members believed that she was brutally raped and murdered and Wang, Chen and Liu were the prime suspects. There were even rumours that thugs were hired to rape and murder Li to punish her for refusing to submit to plagiarism demands during school examination, and that the perpetrators of this hideous crime had kinship relations with the county’s party secretary Wang 王 and the provincial public security department head Jiang 姜. Official autopsy results, however, stated that Li had committed suicide and drowned, and Wang, Chen and Liu were released before the first autopsy even began. While it is a social fact that rapid economic transformation during the reform era has brought about overall concomitant rise in crime – the *2010 Blue Book of China’s Society* reported 12,000 cases of homicide (increase of 0.4 per cent from the previous year), 28,000 cases of rape (11.4 per cent increase), 6,064 cases of arson (26.4 per cent increase), 1,045 cases of planting of dangerous material (37.5 per cent increase) and 237,000 cases of robbery (6.7 per cent rise) in the first ten months of 2009 (Fan, Song and Yan, 2009: 86)<sup>123</sup> – and indeed acute social contradictions, deteriorating social order and State-civil society relations, out-of-control crime, worsening income and wealth disparity

Table 16 State's vs Society's Version of the Case of Li Shufen

	What the people believed	Government's version
Cause of death	Li Shufen was brutally raped and murdered	Li Shufen jumped into the river herself and drowned
Background of Wang Jiao, Chen Guangquan and Liu Yanchao who were present at Li Shufen's death	Kinship relations with party secretary Wang of the county, or related to Jiang, head of the provincial public security department	Parents of all three were peasants in the village, not relatives of the party secretary
How were Li Shufen's family members beaten up?	Li Shufen's uncle, grandfather and grandmother were beaten up, lying with critical injuries in the hospital; her aunt was locked up at the police station, with her hair cut off; her uncle was beaten up by public security (police) and injured during argument	Li Shufen's grandfather, grandmother and aunt were not beaten up, neither were they locked up at the police station; her uncle was not beaten up by the police – he was in fact beaten up by somebody in front of an insurance company and the case was being investigated
Who recovered Li Shufen's body from the river?	Li Xiuzhong 李秀忠, her uncle	Fire brigade
Autopsy on 25th June 2008	Public security and armed police had come to take the body away for autopsy but were disallowed by the people; public security finally took away Li Shufen's internal organs, hence Li's body in the coffin was without internal organs	Li Shufen's family members agreed to drowning as the cause of death but refused to let the body be buried; they were asking the public security department to order Wang Jiao, Liu Yanchao and Chen Guangquan to pay a compensation of 500,000 yuan



in Weng'an, a mining county with a highly-mixed ethnic minority and Han Chinese population of 460,000, has often been blamed for the June 2008 riots, the standard official "black box" approach, as in so many other cases throughout the country, had served to accentuate the people's distrust of the government and fed further the rumour mill (Table 16<sup>124</sup>) and pushed the situation to the boiling point.

Covering up and news blackout have become a routine and standard procedure. In the Li Shufen case, for instance, the government had moved swiftly to impose *si feng* 四封 ("four blockades"), i.e. *feng wang* 封网 (blocking the Internet), *feng cheng* 封城 (blocking the town), *feng tongxin* 封通信 (blocking mails) and *feng jizhe* 封记者 (blocking reporters). As a result, the mainstream media simply reflected the standardized version from the local government officials, Internet postings were severely cut, people involved were kept out of reach of the press, and many family members of the victim disappeared for many days before reappearing to tell the press about their full support for *hexie* 和谐<sup>125</sup> ("harmony"). In the parlance of the sarcastic Chinese netizens, they had already been "harmonized" (*bei hexie* 被和谐) while Li Shufen had been "suicided" (*bei zisha* 被自杀).<sup>126</sup> Just like in the case of the Wenzhou derailment and many other cases, while such State response can be blamed on the local governments and their officials, what lies behind is ultimately the central Party-State's paramount concern over any perceived threat to a "harmonious society" and the "stability above all else" bottom line that it sees as a cornerstone, besides economic prosperity and the monopoly of violence, of the perpetuation of its one-party rule.

However, the ultimate question remains: Can social harmony be imposed top-down by State coercion and relentless suppression of dissent in a legal system devoid of judicial independence? Such a question is indeed futile as there has never been any pretension in the party leaders' pronouncements that the fundamental concern represents anything other than the ultimate aim of perpetuating the one-party rule of the CCP which looks upon itself to be the only political organization in modern Chinese history that has been proven to be able to advance the livelihood of the Chinese people and make China a great and proud nation – a mentality described by China's well-known writer Han Han 韩寒 recently in his weblog after the Wenzhou derailment as follows: "They feel that, from a larger perspective, 'We've organized the Olympics, we've abolished the agricultural tax, yet you're not applauding but instead always making a great fuss about trivialities – What are you up to? Originally we could be tighter in politics than North Korea, poorer in economy than Sudan, more ruthless in governing than the Khmer Rouge, because we have a much larger army than they do, but we aren't. Yet you do not show your gratitude, but want us to apologize ...'"<sup>127</sup>

## 9. Middle Class, Trade Unionism and Dissent

Recent years have witnessed an increasing interest in the sociopolitical attitude of the country's rapidly growing middle class and the changing behaviour of the workers amidst the demise of the State monopsony of labour, the rapid development of marketization, the inflow of foreign investments and the growth of China into the "factory of the world".

### 9.1. Rise of the Middle Class and Extra-Party Activism

He bade me observe it, and I should always find, that the calamities of life were shared among the upper and lower part of mankind; but that the middle station had the fewest disasters.

– Daniel Defoe (1719), *Robinson Crusoe*, Ch. I

The existence of a middle class in the conventional sense of the term is still a debatable issue in China. For instance, according to Li (2008)<sup>128</sup>, it may not be appropriate to identify the Chinese "middle class" before China enters the stage of late industrialization or post-industrialization, as the majority of the Chinese white-collar service-sector professionals are part of the upper classes of the cadres and the reborn bourgeoisie. The speed with which this presently illusive class is going to emerge unequivocally in the changing class pyramid depends of course on the dynamics of social mobility in the long process of modern Chinese industrialization. The impacts of China's economic reforms in the post-Mao period especially since the critical juncture of 1989 (a catalyst that led to Deng Xiaoping's reaffirmation of the path of reform in his *nanxun* in 1992) on social mobility have been tremendous, and their significance is outstanding especially in view of the barriers that existed just before the reforms began, viz. the *hukou* 户口/*huji* 户籍 system, administrative documentation system and political status (ideological) barrier.

Nevertheless, amidst the prevalent confusion over the definition and the characterization of China's urban middle class, some researchers have been trying to estimate its size. While Zhou Xiaohong claimed that 11.9 per cent of the urban residents of Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, Guangzhou and Wuhan belonged to the middle class as defined by occupation, educational background and income (Zhou (ed.), 2005: 45), Li Chunling estimated the middle classes of China to be 15.9 per cent by occupational definition, 24.6 per cent by the income definition, 35.0 per cent by consumption-level definition, and 46.8 per cent by respondent's identification (Li, 2005: 512). However, in an earlier paper Li identified just 4.1 per cent of total population in China who fulfilled the four definitions though the number increased to 8.7 per cent if the focus was just on the urban district (Li, 2004: 62).<sup>129</sup> On the other hand, according to data from the China General Social Survey (CGSS)

carried out by the Renmin University and Hong Kong University of Science and Technology in 2006, China's middle class constituted about 22 per cent of the total population (see Yang, 2010: 438).

While Western journalists and social scientists tend to see the emergence of the Chinese urban middle class as conducive to political reforms and democratization, exemplified by American columnist Nicholas Kristof's comment that "Western investment in China would bring a desire for 'bourgeois' democratic freedom in China" (cited in Mann, 2007: 49), Chinese sociologists have focused more on the necessity to enlarge the urban middle class to attain sociopolitical stability – as in "buffering" social conflicts caused by the bipolarization of the poor and the rich (Zhang, 2004: 271).<sup>130</sup> According to Zhang Wanli, this "buffering function" is the first of the three functions of the Chinese middle class, the other two being the role model of the acquisition of social status in a just and fair manner and the "behavioural role model of the socialist market economy and modern social value" (Zhang, 2004: 271-272). Given the fact that unlike its Western counterpart, the Chinese middle class, besides the white-collar workers and well-educated professionals, also includes the reemerging bourgeoisie – the 2.6 per cent (2006 figure) of China's population comprising mostly owners of small- or medium-sized enterprises – according to Yang (2010), as long as "the majority of the middle class are able to maintain their current lifestyle despite the social policy reform, the force of democratization is unlikely to become strong" (Yang, 2010: 437), and with the majority of them hoping "to benefit from the economic growth and maintain their current lifestyle; they are therefore more prepared to be subservient to an authoritarian state for economic security and sociopolitical stability" (*ibid.*: 452, citing the findings of Li, 2009).

In spite of the fact that extra-Party activism remains disjointed today, Benton (2010: 323) pointed out two positive developments for the democracy movement, namely, the germination in the political sphere of a systematic alternative to the politics of the Chinese Communist Party and the growing trend towards an independent labour movement. Despite what has been said above regarding the middle class in contemporary China, it has to be admitted that the country's middle class is indeed a highly heterogeneous group. Yang (2010) noted the difference in sociopolitical outlook between the old middle class (mainly referring to the self-employed, small merchants and manufacturers whose emergence can be attributed to the early market liberalization in the 1980s) and the new middle class (emerged in the 1990s, mainly salaried professionals and technical and administrative employees who work in large corporations).<sup>131</sup>

In contrast to the democratic consciousness and sense of social justice of the new middle class and "marginal middle class" (the latter referring to the sales and service workers and the middle/lower-level clerical workers),

the old middle class tends to care more about its own financial situation and “hold relatively conservative political views and are more likely to support state authoritarianism and have the least consciousness of social inequality and justice” (*ibid.*: 452). The rapid transition from the command economy to free market with extensive economic decentralization has engendered an interdependent patron-client relationship between local government officials and the private entrepreneurs who have in turn also adopted a series of adaptive strategies and close ties with local government officials, which essentially prevent them from being a force for change, and since many of them rely heavily on government patronage for their success in profit-making, it is not a surprise that they are among CCP’s most important bases of support (*ibid.*: 452-454)<sup>132</sup>.

Nevertheless, the new middle class, who has emerged and expanded rapidly since the 1990s and soon overshadowed the old middle class in terms of status and prestige, is shown by the CGSS 2006 to exhibit the most democratic consciousness while the marginal middle class is shown to be comparatively more vulnerable and hence more sympathetic towards the lower class and exhibit a strong sense of social justice and democracy (*ibid.*: 437, 452-453, Table 9). Their existence and their sociopolitical outlook have definitely contributed to the birth of a coherent and organized political opposition culminating in the Charter 08 which called for liberal democracy, political federalism and an end to one-party rule, twenty years after the June Fourth Beijing-Tiananmen tragedy, three decades after Democracy Wall, and nine decades after the May Fourth Movement. Feng Chongyi 冯崇义, who called the Charter “the most important collective expression of Chinese liberal thought to emerge since the founding of the People’s Republic in 1949”, pointed out that the imprisonment of Liu Xiaobo “has not succeeded in forcing one single signatory to withdraw, nor has it prevented more than ten thousand Chinese at home and abroad from adding their names to the document” although he conceded that it might have led “many more who share the values and aspirations of Charter 08 to remain silent” (Feng, 2010)<sup>133</sup>.

## 9.2. Working Class and Trade Unionism

The workers have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to gain.

– Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels (1872), *The Communist Manifesto*

Regarding the trade union movement, when electrician Wei Jingsheng put up his manifesto “The Fifth Modernization” (i.e. democracy, in addition to the pursuit of the “Four Modernizations” of China’s agricultural, industrial, national defense and science sectors declared by Deng Xiaoping) on the

“Democracy Wall” on the morning of 5th December 1978 at a busy city intersection not far from the Tiananmen Square – an action that landed him a 15-year jail term and continuous subsequent persecution – no independent trade union existed in the country and Wei did not brought about one like *Solidarność* which emerged after his Polish electrician counterpart Lech Wałęsa scaled the fence of Gdańsk’s Lenin Shipyard in 1980. When Han Dongfang 韩东方 convened the Autonomous Workers’ Federation in Beijing during the student-led demonstrations of 1989, independent trade unions had also not yet emerged.

Then during the first half of 2010 while the nation and indeed the world were shocked, transfixed by and perplexed with the spate of suicides and attempted suicides<sup>134</sup> at the Foxconn conglomerate’s factory in Shenzhen, Guangdong Province, that resulted in the death or injury of more than a dozen workers within the short span of about 4 months from the first suicide on 23rd January 2010 to the end of May (which continued with the fatal thirteenth and fourteenth “jumps” at its factories in Foshan 佛山, Guangdong, and Kunshan 昆山, Jiangsu, respectively on 20th July and 4th August<sup>135</sup>, and a 17th “jump” back in Shenzhen on 19th July 2011 bringing the total number of casualties to fifteen<sup>136</sup>), workers in some other enterprises in the country, such as Honda’s plant in Foshan, were seen organizing strikes seeking higher wages and better working conditions – a phenomenon unseen before in this state of the dictatorship of the proletariat ostensibly heeding Marx and Engels’s call of “Workers of the world, unite!”<sup>137</sup> These striking Honda workers were observed to be “well organized, strategic and assertive, demanding sizeable wage increases, proposing a pay scale and a career ladder, electing their own representatives, re-electing office-bearers to their union branch and demonstrating solidarity and a determination to win”<sup>138</sup>. Indeed, as Benton observed:

[...] collective bargaining by elected shop stewards is now a feature of industrial relations in some factories. More and more workers, emboldened by legislation designed to strengthen their contractual rights, are calling for greater rights, and a few are calling for trade unions separate from the state-controlled National Federation of Trade Unions.

(Benton, 2010: 323)

Indeed increasingly the All China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) – the only legal trade union in China, which in 2008 had a total of 212 million members and a union density (percentage of employees belonging to unions) of 73.7 per cent, making it the world’s largest union with more members than those of the rest of the world’s trade unions put together – has been criticized by Chinese and foreign labour activists and scholars for its inability to protect Chinese workers’ rights (Qi, 2010: 421-422). Unlike trade unions in the West

which represent autonomous labour organizations reflecting workers' interests, a Chinese trade union is in fact just one of the State apparatuses serving governmental goals through mediating labour relations in the country (see the relationship between ACFTU and the Party-State in Qi, 2010: 424, Figure 2), and together with the China Communist Youth League and the All-China Women's Federation, the ACFTU is defined by the CCP as an important social pillar for its regime stability:

[...] as one of the government agencies, the ACFTU and its local branches are able to protect labour rights only to the extent that the government allows. For most local governments, labour relation is of a much lower priority than developing local GDP. If they have to develop local economy at the expense of labour rights, they usually would not hesitate to do so. Therefore, the major role of the ACFTU and its local branches is to help the governments achieve economic goals through maintaining stable labour relations. The grassroots trade unions at the workplace level are supposedly under the jurisdiction of the ACFTU's local branches. Like ACFTU and its local branches, which are subordinated to the government at the same level, workplace unions are actually controlled by the workplace management. As a result, they also lack motivation and power to proactively protect workers' interests in their respective workplaces.

(*ibid.*: 422-423)

Referring to the worker suicides at Foxconn and the migrant worker strikes at the Honda automotive company, Anita Chan 陳佩華 noted that "at Foxconn, the union did not even come forward to make a statement. And at Honda, the union blatantly sided with the local government, which in turn was on the side of the employer"<sup>139</sup>. In fact, Chan observed that the migrant workers were having a stereotypical image that the official trade unions are "useless" (*ibid.*).

In the process of maintaining a tight grip on political power in ensuring the CCP's perpetuation of its Party-State monopoly while delivering on the economic front and bringing prosperity and wellbeing to the long-suffering people of this giant country, the neo-authoritarian developmentalism followed since June Fourth could be leading the country on a path threaded before by various East Asian countries like Taiwan (Republic of China) and Singapore – a model sometimes termed "State corporatism". When the enraged and desperate Beijing citizens yelled "fascists" at the rampaging PLA armoured vehicles on that murderous night of 3rd-4th June 1989, when Chai Ling in hiding screamed "fascists" in her taped condemnation of the massacre shortly following that night of terror, when that lone individual<sup>140</sup> stood in front of and blocked a column of tanks signifying terrifying State power in that poignant image reminiscent of Pablo Picasso's *Guernica*<sup>141</sup>, when melancholy and despair descended upon and the tune of *Xueran de Fengcai*

血染的风采<sup>142</sup> surrounded the hunger strikers in the Tiananmen Square, there was little telling of the course to come to pass in China's subsequent political evolution. "Fascism" could eventually prove to be an overstatement – other than that night's slaughter and subsequent arrests and executions, nothing that came in this one-party state in the aftermath of June Fourth remotely approached Franco's repression against the defeated Republicans and their supporters in the dictator's "no-party" state<sup>143</sup> immediately following the end of the civil war, though the term could still be in a certain way fitting if it is defined as the requirement for the faith in and unquestioning loyalty to the one-party State (or in the case of Franco's Spain, in particular to the *Caudillo*). The post-June Fourth State corporatism, or referred to by some observers as "Leninist corporatism"<sup>144</sup>, could provide a closer resemblance to Franco's *Nuevo Estado* (New State), and the "harmonious society" vision declared in recent years does recall Franco's vision of social cohesion and harmonious relationship between employers and workers via corporatism that would promote a close collaboration between them under the direction of the State and his corporatist policies to regulate the economy by controlling the conditions of work, wages, prices, production and exchange.

On the other hand, illegal independent trade unions which have emerged sporadically in China since the 1980s were swiftly persecuted by the government which is obviously wary of the possible birth of a Chinese version of Solidarność. Being uncompromisingly against independent trade unions, the CCP regime has in fact not been seen to be soft towards strikers in State-owned enterprises but holds a double standard towards strikers in foreign-owned plants on whom it is not only less likely to crack down but whose industrial actions it may even try to use "to blow new life into the official unions, bring the activists under control, get a handle on foreign firms, and play up to nationalist sentiments" (Benton, 2010: 323).

Such double standard, nevertheless, could carry inherent risks because like Tarschys' law in public choice theories, demonstration effects might work if workers in foreign-owned factories were to have their way since "wages, rights, and conditions in Chinese-owned factories are usually even worse than in foreign-owned ones" (*ibid.*). Furthermore, nationalist sentiments have always been known to be a double-edged sword. The nationalistic *fengqing* 愤青 ("angry youths"), who form the backbone of what Yang and Lim (2010) called the third wave of Chinese nationalism, for instance are observed to be not only unhappy with the Western countries, but also with the domestic situation in China. The *fengqing*, being born out of the marginalized New Left after the mid-1990s due the Zhu Rongji 朱镕基 administration's radical reform policies of corporatization and privatization, besides being unhappy with the perceived unfair treatment of China by the West – a feeling manifested in the 2009 bestselling book *Zhongguo Bu Gaoxing* 中国不高兴

[unhappy China], are also unhappy with the perceived pro-Western orientation in the Chinese government's policymaking and China's rapid integration with the international economic order and its neo-liberal economic policy that causes over-marketization and commercialization that they are blaming for the country's increasing income disparities and social ills (*ibid.*: 477). "[W]hen the goals of the state and society are identical, the power of nationalism tends to be strong. But when their goals are different, the power of nationalism will be constrained", commented Yang and Lim, for nationalism does not always complement the interest of the government: "The government and social forces might perceive and define China's national interest differently. If the government does not control or guide various nationalistic forces with care, the greatest impact will be dealt on China's domestic policies rather than on the external front." (*ibid.*: 479) Top on the list of domestic challenges is of course none other than reform-era China's attention-grabbing retreat from equality, as discussed earlier in this paper.

## 10. Conclusion

And as imagination bodies forth / The forms of things unknown, the poet's  
pen / Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing / A local habitation  
and a name.

– William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Act V, Scene I

We have it in our power to begin the world over again.

– Thomas Paine (1776), *Common Sense*, Appendix to the Third Edition

This paper began by purveying various key issues underlying China's social transition, such as poverty, inequality and social stratification, ethnoregional disparities and contradictions, rise of the middle class, development of trade unionism, and the relations between structure and agency within the overall political milieu in contemporary China where social change is moving apace amidst astounding economic transformation. Ironically, as pointed out in the paper, some factors which at first look seem to be system-threatening may instead work for the ruling regime's advantage. According to Perry (2002), for instance, social protests in today's China constitute one of the major components of social stability, as the protests serve as checks against the leaders' abuse of power and as mechanisms ensuring the accountability of the government, thereby "undergirding rather than undermining the political system" in China's authoritarian polity where multi-party competitive elections do not exist to provide an effective check on the misbehaviour of State authorities.<sup>145</sup> In addition, Tong and Lei (2010: 499-500) considered large-scale mass incidents driven by economic grievances, which were due to "the misconduct of local officials or the process of socioeconomic



transformation when there was a lack of experience in handling these problems or the lack of proper regulations”, as not regime-threatening because by asking the government to *zuozhu* (enforce justice), the protests had in fact endorsed the legitimacy of the regime, and as long as the regime had plenty of financial resources to satisfy the protesters’ demands – hence the significance of GDPism as a cornerstone of regime maintenance – it further consolidates its legitimacy. On the other hand, in the case of inequality, Friedman (2009) argued that the beneficiaries of economic growth were able to find their own individual solutions to their problems and resigned themselves to an authoritarian government as a defense against the threat from potentially vengeful losers in the market economy, thereby rendering social polarization inconducive to democratic sentiment among them.<sup>146</sup>

Green (2008) showed the process of social change typically involving a combination of four different components: context (the environment within which changes take place, thus crucial in determining the nature and direction of change), institutions (the organizations and rules, both formal and informal, that establish the “rules of the game” governing the behaviour of agents – including culture, family structure, civil service, private sector, governmental system, patron-client network, etc.), agents (organizations and individuals actively involved in promoting or blocking change, e.g. ruling party, social movements, political and business elite, military and police, inspirational leaders, social entrepreneurs) and events (one-off events triggering wider change and being key catalysts for social and political changes, e.g. wars, pandemics like AIDS, SARS, A(H1N1), civil conflicts such as “mass incidents”, ethnic or ethnoregional riots, demonstrations and crackdowns, natural disasters, economic crises).<sup>147</sup> As mentioned earlier, Archer’s double morphogenesis sees both structure and human agency as cojoint products of interaction. Upon the praxis between operating structures and purposely acting human agents, agency is constantly shaped by structure which in turn is being reshaped in the process. Hence, finally, it needs to be noted that amidst the dynamic interplay of such an array of critical socioeconomic factors that underlie the surging currents of social change, be they the overt or subliminal emergent changes that tend to act to subvert the stability of well laid-out projectable changes envisaged by the ruling regime (Yeoh, 2010a) or an illusive transformative change biding its time prior to a critical point of bifurcation as pointed out by the chaos theory (*ibid.*; Prigogine and Stengers, 1984), the role of the individual as a catalyst for change cannot be underestimated, even if the long-term impact of the individual’s action is not immediately explicit and the lone crusade involved does not receive adequate sympathy of the wider public. Such is the tragedy of the commons (*à la* Hardin, 1968) resulted from incomplete feedback loops, among others.

On the other hand, the duality of structure and agency pointed out by the structuration theory implies that there exists a symbiotic relationship between structures that shape agencies' motives into practices and agencies whose routine practices in turn create structures. None can exist without the other. For instance, the brutal crushing of the democracy movement of 1989 "were of such magnitude that they continue to reverberate in people's imagination and the collective memory – and in the sleep of party leaders and officials, as a nightmare", commented Benton (2010: 322), "The experience of facing down the government created a generation no longer prepared to act as an off-stage army for party factions, an attitude passed on to the protestors' children. Although most of the 1989 generation have stopped being active, some continue to work for political and social change. The Chinese democracy movement in exile has survived in the current harsh environment and there have been many attempts to organize a political opposition in China, for example, the establishment of the China Democracy Party in 1998." After all, individuals, who together form social movements, are at the very foundations of all socioeconomic and sociopolitical changes.

## Notes

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- 1. <<http://www.china.org.cn/english/congress/227029.htm>>
- 2. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) totaled 18. They are (1) Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people whose income is less than one dollar a day; (2) Halve, between 1990 and 2015, the proportion of people who

suffer from hunger; (3) By 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling; (4) Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and to all levels of education no later than 2015; (5) Reduce by two-thirds, between 1990 and 2015, the under-five mortality rate; (6) Reduce the maternal mortality ratio by three-quarters between 1990 and 2015; (7) Have halted by 2015, and begun to reverse, the spread of HIV/AIDS; (8) Have halted by 2015, and begun to reverse, the incidence of malaria and other major diseases; (9) Integrate the principles of sustainable development into country policies and programs and reverse the loss of environmental resources; (10) Halve, by 2015, the proportion of people without sustainable access to safe drinking water; (11) Have achieved, by 2020, a significant improvement in the lives of at least 100 million slum dwellers; (12) Develop further an open, rule-based, predictable, non-discriminatory trading and financial system; (13) Address the special needs of the least developed countries ( ... enhanced program of debt relief for and cancellation of official bilateral debt ... ); (14) Address the special needs of landlocked countries and small island developing states ...; (15) Deal comprehensively with the debt problems of developing countries through national and international measures; (16) In cooperation with developing countries, develop and implement strategies for decent and productive work for youth; (17) In cooperation with pharmaceutical companies, provide access to affordable essential drugs in developing countries; and (18) In cooperation with the private sector, make available the benefits of new technologies, especially information and communications (summarized by Woo *et al.*, 2004).

3. Bert Hoffman, "Access to Opportunity Eases Income Inequality", *The Star* (Malaysian daily), 21st January 2006.
4. Or more officially, the "Communist Party of China" (CPC).
5. Yan (2010: 179), based on data from *China Statistical Yearbook 2008*.
6. In general, though not totally without ambiguity, "private entrepreneurs" or "private enterprise owners" (*siying qiyezhushu* 私营企业主 / *minying qiyejia* 民营企业) here refer mainly to owners of domestic individually owned, family-based or shareholding firms with eight or more employees though joint ventures and wholly foreign-owned firms are not by definition excluded, while individual entrepreneurs who employ fewer than eight employees are referred to as "self-employed" / *getihu* 个体户. For more details on the ten major social strata, see Li and Chen (2004: 13), Figure 1-3, and Yeoh (2010a: 270), Figure 18.
7. Referring to the 22 *sheng* 省 (i.e. provinces), 5 *zizhiqu* 自治区 (i.e. "autonomous regions" – each a first-level administrative subdivision having its own local government, and a minority entity that has a higher population of a particular minority ethnic group – of Guangxi of the Zhuang, Nei Monggol/Inner Mongolia of the Mongols, Ningxia of the Hui, Xizang/Tibet of the Tibetans and Xinjiang of the Uyghurs) and 4 *zhixishi* 直辖市 (municipalities with province status, directly under the central government – Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai and Chongqing).
8. The largest denomination of China's renminbi 人民币 ("people's currency", Rmb) is yuan 元 / 圆 (Latinized symbol ¥ or ¥), a term with cognates in the

- Japanese yen or en 円 (from 圓; Latinized symbol ¥) and Korean won 원 / 圓 (Latinized symbol ₩). A yuan is equivalent to about US\$0.146.
9. The ethnic fractionalization index (EFI, see Yeoh, 2003: 28) used to show provincial ethnic diversity is constructed through the computational procedure of Rae and Taylor's index of fragmentation (F), defined as the probability that a randomly selected pair of individuals in a society will belong to different groups (Rae and Taylor, 1970: 22-3). The index varies from 0 to 1. The value is zero for a completely homogeneous country (the probability of belonging to different groups is nil). The value 1 occurs in the hypothetical society where each individual belongs to a different group. The fragmentation index is identical to Rae's measure of party system fractionalization (Rae, 1967: 55-8) and Greenberg's measure of linguistic diversity (Greenberg, 1956).
  10. The official population figures for Tibet which was used to compute EFI in Figure 11 differ much from certain unofficial ones. The official figures have been disputed by the Tibetan government-in-exile who claims that "accelerating Han population transfer into Tibet ... has reduced the Tibetan people to a minority in their own land ... [and today] there are over 7.5 million non-Tibetan settlers in Tibet including Chinese and Hui Muslims, compared to six million Tibetans" (Cook and Murray, 2001: 141). However, such allegations of population transfer is rebutted by the Beijing government, who argues that "the only Han Chinese living in Tibet are specialists who have gone there voluntarily to help in the region's development ... [and they] make up less than five per cent of the population and many of the people are there for only a few years before returning home" (*ibid.*).
  11. As the applicant of poverty relief fund and the last user of the funds, the county (*xian*) is the most important and basic unit in the work of poverty alleviation (Chai *et al.*, 2004: 16).
  12. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Jenseits von Gut und Böse: Vorspiel einer Philosophie der Zukunft* (1886), translated by R.J. Hollingdale as *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future* (1973), reprinted with revisions and an introduction by Michael Tanner (1990), London: Penguin Books.
  13. 1 *mu* 亩 = 0.0667 hectares.
  14. 东方日报 (*Oriental Daily News/ODN*, Malaysian daily), 26th July 2011.
  15. *Ibid.*
  16. *ODN*, 31st May 2011.
  17. Due to the abnormal size of China's population and in particular the size of China's citizens of the Han ethnicity, a distortion or misrepresentation emerges in the application of the term "multiethnic" to China as the country's large populations of minorities – about 110 million in total, including the 16 million Zhuang, 10 million Manchu, 9 million Hui, 8 million Uyghurs, 5 million Mongols and 5 million Tibetans – are practically dwarfed almost to invisibility by the sheer size of the Han population (about 92 per cent of the total population of China). In fact, based on the "critical mass" theory (advanced, among others, by Semyonov and Tyree [1981]), societies are considered multiethnic only if minorities constitute more than ten per cent of their population.
  18. *ODN*, 29th May 2011.

19. ODN, 29th May 2011.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Or the “Inner Mongolian People’s Revolutionary Party” (“Dotoyadu Mongyol-un Arad-un Qubisqal-un Nam” in Mongolian) which was founded in 1925, allied to the CCP. The party was dissolved in 1946.
22. Such harsh landscape has been the object of lamentation since ancient days, as the Tang 唐 dynasty poet Li Bai 李白 grieved in his immortal poem *Shu Dao Nan* 蜀道难 [Hard Roads in Sichuan]: “Yiyu! Xi! / Wei hu gao zai! / Shu dao zhi nan nan yu shang qingtian ... Huanghe zhi fei shang bude guo / Yuanrou yu du chou panyuan ... Qi xian ye ruo chi / Jie er yuandao zhi ren hu wei hu lai zai? ...” [Oh / but it is high and very dangerous! / Such traveling on the roads of Sichuan is harder than scaling the blue sky ... Such height would be hard going even for a yellow crane / So pity the poor monkeys who have only paws to use ... With all this danger upon danger / Why are you people from far away still coming here? ...]
23. ODN, 4th March 2008.
24. Opening words of Thomas Paine’s *The American Crisis*, pamphlet I, 23rd December 1776 (first appeared in the *Pennsylvania Journal*, 19th December 1776).
25. Cited by Tong and Lei (2010: 488), the 2008 figure being from an estimate reported by Andrew Jacobs, “Dragons, Dancing Ones, Set-off a Riot in China”, *New York Times*, 10th February 2009, and an estimate of 90,000 such incidents annually for 2007, 2008, and 2009 being quoted from a Chinese insider by John Garnaut, “China Insider Sees Revolution Brewing”, *Sidney Morning Herald*, 2nd March 2010.
26. The term “xiagang” refers to redundant workers mainly at State enterprises, without directly describing them as “unemployed”. Still officially attached to their work units or enterprises, the *xiagang* workers continue to receive basic minimum subsidies for their living and medical expenses, and are encouraged to change job, probably through State-run job and re-employment centres, or go into small businesses. In line with State enterprise reforms, the number of *xiagang* workers has been on the rise: 4 million in 1995, 8 million in 1996, 12 million in 1997, 16 million in 1998, 20 million in 1999, though dropping to 11 million in 2001. (Zhou, 2006: 289)
27. See Chen (2004: 32), cited in Tong and Lei (2010: 488-489).
28. ODN, 13th June 2011, 18th June 2011.
29. ODN, 12th June 2011, 18th June 2011.
30. ODN, 14th June 2011.
31. In contrast with “free-floating aggression”, the more general concept of “scapegoating” is reserved for the transfer of hostility towards any object (Turner and Killian, 1957:19).
32. Or paraphrasing *Yazhou Zhoukan*, “the hundred days of People Power that made one proud to be a Chinese” (“Preface”, *Yazhou Zhoukan*, 1989: 4).
33. Unlike the Prague Spring of 1968 – which lent its name to the analogous Beijing counterpart a decade later and here again to foreign observers to describe the hundred-day Tiananmen demonstrations in 1989 – that was cut short by invading

foreign troops, the crushing of the 1989 “Beijing Spring” was entirely a domestic affair, described by the Western journalists as the Rape of Peking (Beijing) in an insinuated analogy with the infamous Rape of Nanking (Nanjing 南京) by the Japanese troops in World War II.

34. “The Rape of Peking” (editorial), *Asiaweek*, 16th June 1989.
35. *ODN*, 19th August 2011.
36. See, for instance, Örkesh Dölet’s 8th July 2009 *The Guardian* article “A Declaration of Oppression” <<http://wuerkaixi.com/>>.
37. 世界維吾爾代表大會.
38. “China’s Despair and China’s Hope”, originally appeared in *The New York Review of Books* on 2nd February 1989, translated by Perry Link.
39. See, e.g. Bo (2010). In an interesting attempt at refutation of Minxin Pei’s (2006) claim of CCP’s illegitimacy, Bo set out to repudiate point by point Pei’s arguments which were based upon a series of international indexes which the former listed in details: “China is one of the most authoritarian political systems in the world according to the Polity IV Project, is almost completely ‘unfree’ according to the Freedom House; and is one of the most corrupt countries according to Transparency International. China was ranked in the bottom third of the eighty countries surveyed in terms of ‘quality of governance ranking’ according to one group of the World Bank and was considered a weak state according to another group of the World Bank. China found itself next to the legion of failed states and most repressive countries in terms of ‘voice and accountability’ and also in the company of weak states such as Nicaragua, Cambodia, Papua New Guinea, Egypt, and Mali in terms of ‘regulatory quality’. China was no better than Namibia, Croatia, Kuwait, and Mexico in terms of ‘government effectiveness’, was comparable to Belarus, Mexico, Tunisia, and Cuba in terms of ‘political stability’, and was in the company of Mexico, Madagascar, and Lebanon in terms of ‘rule of law’.” (Bo, 2010: 102-103, citing Pei, 2006: 5-6)
40. *ODN*, 20th July 2009.
41. After a storm of protest from Chinese intellectuals and academics against the arrest, Ilham Tohti was finally released on 23rd August 2009 (*ODN*, 11th September 2009).
42. *ODN*, 10th July 2009, 15th July 2009, 17th July 2009.
43. *ODN*, 24th April 2011.
44. Such suggestions for China, which vary in arrangement details, include a prominent confederation proposal of a *Chunghua Lienpang Kunghekuo* 中華聯邦共和國 (“Federal Republic of China”), a “Third Republic” – the first republic being the *Chunghua Minkuo* 中華民國 (Republic of China) and the second, *Zhonghua Renmin Gongheguo* 中华人民共和国 (People’s Republic of China) – proposed by Yan Jiaqi 嚴家其 (1992) encompassing the “loose republics” of Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, Tibet, Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang (in an arrangement like that of the European Union) and “close republics” consisting of the rest of present-day China (in an arrangement akin to the US’s). Yan obviously had in mind some sort of coexistence of federal and confederal systems within a single country.

45. Following Professor Zhou Tianyong from the Central Party School, China's authoritarian one-party political system will and should remain unchanged until at least 2037 (Zhou, Wang and Wang (eds), 2007: 2, 6, 45-46).
46. For federal sustainability, see Yeoh (2010b: 616-618).
47. O'Donnell and Schmitter (1986: 9) opined that a transition from authoritarian rule could produce a democracy, but it could also terminate with a liberalized authoritarian regime (*dictablanda*) or a restrictive, illiberal democracy (*democradura*) (see Diamond, 2002: 24).
48. Bo Yibo, the former Chinese vice-premier, was in fact expressing the reformers' feeling towards the lessons of the multiple cycles of administrative decentralization and recentralization in China: "A [more] important and fundamental lesson of the [1958] attempt to improve the economic management system is: We only saw the vices of overcentralization of power, and sought to remedy the situation by decentralizing powers to the lower levels. When we felt too much power had been decentralized, we recentralized them. We did not then recognize the inadequacies of putting sole emphasis on central planning (and in particular a system dominated by mandatory planning) and totally neglecting and denying the role of the market [...] As a result over a long period of time (after the 1958 decentralization) we were trapped within the planned economy model. Adjustments and improvements could only work around the cycles of decentralization and recentralization. Moreover the recipients of more powers are invariably the local governments, rather than enterprises." (Bo Yibo 薄一波, *Ruogan Zhongda Juece yu Shijian de Huigu* 若干重大决策与事件的回顾 [Looking back at some important decisions and events], 1993, p. 804, cited in Li, 2003: 1.)
49. Such as the bloody Han-Hui ethnic conflicts in 2004 and 2007.
50. *ODN*, 23rd March 2009.
51. Thomas Paine's "To My Fellow-Citizens of the United States of American", signed 27th January 1794, that began *The Age of Reason, Part First*.
52. *ODN*, 4th August 2011.
53. *ODN*, 10th September 2011.
54. *ODN*, 11th August 2011.
55. *ODN*, 21st August 2011.
56. *ODN*, 27th June 2011.
57. *Ibid.*
58. *ODN*, 18th August 2011, 19th August 2011.
59. *ODN*, 14th March 2009.
60. *ODN*, 25th June 2009.
61. *Ibid.*
62. *Zhongguo Renmin Jiefang Jun* 中国人民解放军.
63. *ODN*, 17th March 2009, 22nd March 2009.
64. *ODN*, 19th July 2009.
65. The military junta that rules Burma has officially changed the name of the country in the English language to "Myanmar". Nevertheless, the change has not been endorsed by the National League for Democracy (NLD) that won a landslide victory (80 per cent of parliamentary seats) in the 1990 People's Assembly elections, yet prevented from governing the country to date by

- SLORC, or the State Law and Order Restoration Council. SLORC was formed when the Burmese armed forces seized power following the 8888 (8th August 1988) massacre of pro-democracy demonstrators. SLORC was reconstituted, essentially renamed, as the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) on 15th November 1997. On 7th November 2010, the junta held Burma's first elections in two decades which it blatantly controlled, restricted and manipulated to retain military domination.
66. "Hong Kong Reporter Being Held By China", *Washington Post* Foreign Service, 30th May 2005. <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/05/29/AR2005052900986.html>>
  67. *ODN*, 14th February 2009.
  68. Incidentally, both Malaysia and Singapore were recognized as without press freedom, ranked 143rd and 150th respectively, in a year that witnessed world population enjoying press freedom dropping to the nadir of the decade, with only one-sixth of the total world population of 6.7 billion enjoying the basic human right of press freedom (*ODN*, 4th May 2011).
  69. *ODN*, 4th May 2011.
  70. *ODN*, 9th August 2009.
  71. *ODN*, 20th July 2011.
  72. *ODN*, 27th June 2011.
  73. *ODN*, 4th May 2011.
  74. Dubbed "*liiba* 滤霸" [filtering bully], this software was originally scheduled for compulsory installation by 1st July 2009 on all personal computers entering the Chinese market. The attempt was later temporarily postponed following domestic and international outcry, and finally declared on 13th August to be abandoned except for those computers for public access in schools, cybercafés and other public places. (*ODN*, 10th June 2009, 15th August 2009)
  75. *ODN*, 2nd July 2009.
  76. *ODN*, 24th June 2011.
  77. *ODN*, 3rd September 2009.
  78. *ODN*, 2nd May 2011.
  79. *ODN*, 18th June 2011.
  80. *ODN*, 5th September 2011.
  81. *ODN*, 2nd May 2011, 6th May 2011.
  82. The devastating earthquake that hit the Sichuan Province's Wenchuan 汶川 County, Ngawa 阿坝 *Zizhizhou* 自治州 ("autonomous prefecture") of the Tibetan/Zang 藏 and Qiang 羌 nationalities, and surrounding areas on 12th May 2008 which killed at least 68,000 people and left long-lingering socioeconomic and even political fallout, especially those involving the "tofu-dregs schoolhouses" (*doufuzha xiaoshe* 豆腐渣校舍) scandal, on the country.
  83. *ODN*, 23rd June 2011, 24th June 2011, 13th August 2011.
  84. Born Francisco Paulino Hermenegildo Teófilo Franco Bahamonde in 1892 in the northwestern Iberian coastal town of El Ferrol.
  85. "*Atado, y bien atado* [Tied-up, well tied-up]," ruminated Generalísimo Francisco Franco (*El Caudillo*), prior to his death on 20th November 1975 (cited in Gunther, 1980: 285).



86. See Buckley (1967).
87. "The Rape of Peking" (editorial), *Asiaweek*, 16th June 1989.
88. The structure of political party systems and more specifically their level of internal centralization have been argued to be the determinants of the fiscal structure of the State, i.e. the *degree* of decentralization, in the studies on decentralization as a means for democratizing political regimes and enhancing the efficiency of public policy, its implications for service delivery and democracy, and the political determinants of the process of devolving resources and policy responsibilities to subnational governments (Montero, 2001: 43). In her paper on the case of Latin America, Escobar-Lemmon (2001: 28) noted that at least there "the process of decentralization has come about in parallel to the process of democratization" and the "rationale is that strong subnational power centers will check the national government, consequently preventing the re-emergence of a strong, authoritarian leader nationally." Thus, according to Escobar-Lemmon, "decentralization becomes a way to avoid political crises and/or democratic breakdown. Given that political decentralization could increase opportunities for democratic participation, there is reason to believe that there is a systematic relationship between decentralization and democratization." Elaborating on his second fundamental characteristic of a federal system – democratic pluralism both between and within the territorial components – Duchacek (1988: 16-17) drew attention to federalism being a territorial twin of the open democratic society: "Federalism is not compatible with authoritarian socialist and fascist one-party systems and military juntas. If a single party delegates some minor parts of its central power to the territorial components in which single-party rule also prevails, the result is a unitary and centralist system or, at best, an association or league of territorial dictatorships [...] a spatially sectorized unitary system or a confederation of [...] single-party territorial components [...] a territorial dimension of Lenin's "democratic centralism" – inter-territorial and inter-factional consociationalism of a special kind, but not a federal democracy."
89. The twice-purged pragmatist and reformist Deng Xiaoping is today one of the most enigmatic figures in the history of China who would both be remembered as the pragmatist saviour of modern China who dealt the *coup de grâce* to Mao's failed autarkic collectivist utopia in 1978 and the butcher of Beijing who unleashed his deadly wrath upon the "ungrateful" students and other denizens of the ancient capital in 1989.
90. "Beijing" or "Beijing-Tiananmen" is a more appropriate appellation for the massacre than just "Tiananmen", as most civilian casualties occurred not in the Tiananmen Square but on Beijing streets leading to the square, especially Chang'an Avenue 长安街, when the People's Liberation Army clashed with Beijing residents and workers trying to protect the student demonstrators in Tiananmen Square during that fateful night of 3rd-4th June 1989.
91. In a way analogous to the French Revolution being hijacked by Maximilien Robespierre's Reign of Terror. Chen Tu-hsiu's socialism was but one of the twin manifestations of the May Fourth spirit, the other being liberalism represented by Hu Shih 胡適.

92. While still rudimentary, the rehabilitation and other *de facto* de-Mao programmes, or even the liquidation of the research office of the central Secretariat, and the closing down of left-wing magazines such as *Red Flag*, led the way to further internal structural reform of the CCP in coming days (MacFarquhar, 2009: xxi).
93. Began airing on 16th June 1988, *He Shang*, a six-part television documentary produced by the China Central Television (CCTV), is characterized by its condemnation of China's isolation and admiration of and longing for the openness of Western civilization and modern democracy (Zhao, 2009b: 72, editors' notes # 81). After the June Fourth massacre, CCP denounced the documentary, blamed it for helping to inspire the demonstrations, and according to Zhao Ziyang, attacked him with the claim that he had supported its production, distribution and suppressed criticism against it (Zhao, 2009a: 267-268).
94. The 1989 Tiananmen demonstrations being the first uprising in a the whole series of similar events that led to the demise of authoritarian rule in Eastern Europe countries and Mongolia, the fact that most of these countries were Soviet satellite states with Communist Party rule virtually planted by the USSR rather the result of in the main part homegrown – though foreign-inspired – mass revolutionary movement, and that their 1989-1990 protest movements came after the shocking Beijing massacre all apparently played their roles in the diverse State responses between China and these states, perhaps with the exception of Romania which took a popularly supported palace and army coop to overthrow the hated Communist dictator Nicolae Ceaușescu.
95. Translated from Bao Tong's introduction in Zhao (2009c), pp. 33-34.
96. Spontaneous as the 1989 Tiananmen protests, the "demonstrations that erupted on 4th May 1919 developed into a loose nationalist political movement that was one of the antecedents of the Communist Party's own official foundation in 1921" (Hutton, 2006: 7).
97. Notably too, this was just hardly a year after the anniversary of the posting by Wei Jingsheng, the earlier vanguard of China's democracy movement and an electrician like the Polish labour union activist Lech Walesa who was later elected president of Poland after the fall of the Communist Party dictatorship, of his manifesto "The Fifth Modernization" on the "Democracy Wall" on the morning of 5th December 1978. The State responded by sentencing him to 15 years in prison.
98. *ODN*, 5th May 2011.
99. "Society in every state is a blessing, but government even in its best state is but a necessary evil; in its worst state an intolerable one [... man] finds it necessary to surrender up a part of his property to furnish means for the protection of the rest; and this he is induced to do by the same prudence which in every other case advises him out of two evils to choose the least", said Thomas Paine in the beginning paragraphs of *Common Sense* (1776).
100. According to a report published on China's National Bureau of Statistics website on 14th January 2009, the confirmed 2007 GDP of China at current prices amounted to 25.7306 trillion yuan, an increase of 13 per cent from the previous year (*ODN*, 16th January 2009). While observed to be still short of a third of

US's GDP, analysts had predicted China's GDP to overtake Japan's in three to four years, just as it overtook the United Kingdom and France in 2005 and Germany in 2008. Nevertheless, according to an announcement by Yi Gang 易纲, the director of the State Administration of Foreign Exchange and the deputy governor of China's central bank, the People's Bank of China, on 30th July 2010, China had already superseded Japan to become the world's second largest economy in 2010. However, in terms of GDP per capita, Japan's (US\$37800) was more than 10 times that of China (US\$3600) in year 2009, and Japan's GDP per capita ranking, while having dropped from world's number 2 in 1993 to number 23 by 2008, was still far ahead of China's which ranked beyond 100 (ODN, 9th August 2010).

101. ODN, 1st July 2011.
102. *Ibid.*
103. *Ibid.*
104. ODN, 11th June 2011.
105. *Weiquan* refers to the quest for protecting and defending the civil rights of the citizenry by non-State actors. *Shangfang*, a centuries-old tradition in China, refers to the action of people with grievances who take the last resort of going to Beijing, the capital, to attempt to get their complaints heard against local injustice.
106. *Ibid.*
107. From Fang Lizhi's letter accepting the Peace Prize jointly sponsored by the newspapers *Politiken* of Denmark and *Dagens Nyheter* of Sweden. Fang received the award in absentia in September 1989.
108. Cited in Bertrand Russell (1934), "The Fate of Thomas Paine", in Bertrand Russel (1957), *Why I Am Not a Christian and Other Essays on Religion and Related Subjects*, London: George Allen & Unwin, published in Unwin Paperbacks 1975, re-issued 1979, p. 97.
109. Cited in Tilly (1985: 171).
110. Citing Lewis and Xue (2003: 933); Ma (2007); Xu (1999: 1, 168).
111. Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason, Part First* (1794).
112. See Steven Poole's *Unspeak*<sup>TM</sup> (2006) which begins with a description of Confucius' "Rectification of Names".
113. For instance, see Yu (2010) and Lin Chuo-shui 林濁水, "Liu Xiaopo he Wen Chiapao te Minchu Lu 劉曉波和溫家寶的民主路" <<http://gb.udn.com/gb/blog.udn.com/baogon/4499978>>. Lin is a former legislator of Taiwan's Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) (民主進步黨 (民進黨)).
114. Referring to Deng's well-known gradualist dictum "Cross the river by groping the stones" (*Mo zhe shitou guo he* 摸着石头过河).
115. See, e.g. the interview of the exiled dissident Yan Jiaqi 嚴家其, Zhao's advisor when he was premier, in 2005 <<http://www.epochtimes.com/gb/5/1/30/n798431.htm>>
116. Bertrand Russell (1934), "The Fate of Thomas Paine", in Bertrand Russel (1957), *Why I Am Not a Christian and Other Essays on Religion and Related Subjects*, London: George Allen & Unwin, published in Unwin Paperbacks 1975, re-issued 1979, pp. 97. While the epitaph remained unpublished, a long,

- bitter letter written by Paine to Washington was published in 1796, ending in these words: "And as to you, Sir, treacherous in private friendship (for so you have been to me, and that in the day of danger) and a hypocrite in public life, the world will be puzzled to decide whether you are an apostate or an imposter; whether you have abandoned good principles, or whether you ever had any." (*ibid.*)
117. *Mencius*, edited and translated with an introduction by D.C. Lau, London: Penguin Books, 2005 (Penguin Classics first published 1970).
  118. See, e.g., Qi (2010: 420).
  119. *ODN*, 27th July 2011 and 1st August 2011.
  120. *ODN*, 30th July 2011.
  121. "鐵道部已病入膏肓 溫家寶被迫"以病明志", 蘋果日報 (*Apple Daily*, Hong Kong), 1st August 2011.
  122. The June 1989 tragedy can be observed to be the catalyst of the subsequent authoritarian corporatist evolution and reaffirmation of the path of economic reform (after Deng's *nanxun*) and economic success as realization of the root causes of the tragedy had served to spur the CCP into attempting to reinvent itself as a strong, benevolent and enlightened ruler (i.e. a *dictablanda*), or as Thomas Hobbes referred to in his 1651 treatise, "the generation of that great Leviathan". "The only way to erect such a common power, as may be able to defend them from the invasion of foreigners, and the injuries of one another [...] is, to confer all their power and strength upon one man, or upon one assembly of men, that may reduce all their wills, by plurality of voices, unto one will [...] This is the generation of that great Leviathan [...]", said Thomas Hobbes in *Leviathan* (1651).
  123. On the current crime trend in China, see also Yeoh (2010a: 246-249).
  124. *Yazhou Zhoukan* 亞洲週刊, Vol. 22, Issue 27, 13th July 2008, p. 26. The rumours about Li's missing organs, while being perceived as part of the suspected cover-up by the authorities, could be seen as an extension of the long-running allegation of illegal organ harvest from executed prisoners by the State apparatus and the grisly rumours of such harvest from imprisoned Falungong 法輪功 followers.
  125. Often ridiculed by the Chinese netizens with its homonym *hexie* 河蟹 (river crab).
  126. *Yazhou Zhoukan* 亞洲週刊, Vol. 22, Issue 27, 13th July 2008, p. 4; see also Liu (2009).
  127. *ODN*, 28th July 2011.
  128. Citing Gilbert (2003: 17).
  129. Cited in Sonoda (2010: 352).
  130. Cited in Sonoda (2010: 352).
  131. China's detailed class structure is represented in Yang (2010: 436, Table 1) as follows (2006 figures): leading cadres and government officials (2.3% of total population), managerial personnel (1.3%), private entrepreneurs (2.6%, in general referring to individually owned, family based or shareholding firms with eight or more employees, plus joint ventures and wholly foreign-owned firms, but the focus is on Chinese domestic, private entrepreneurs), professionals (6.3%), clerical workers (7.0%), self-employed (9.5%, *getihu* – in general referring to

- individual entrepreneurs who employ fewer than eight employees), sales and service workers (10.1%), manual workers (14.7%), agricultural labour (50.4%), semi-employed/unemployed (5.9%).
132. Citing Dickson (2007).
  133. Cited in Benton (2010: 324).
  134. Despite rumoured allegation that some cases could be murders linked to the factory security office (大紀元時報 (*The Epoch Times* (Malaysia)), Issue 93, June 2010).
  135. *ODN*, 21st July 2010 and 6th August 2010.
  136. *ODN*, 20th July 2011.
  137. Or “WORKING MEN OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!”, this rallying cry forms the final sentence of *The Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, German edition, 1872 (translated by Samuel Moore, 1888, Penguin Books, London, 1967, 1985, p. 121).
  138. Anita Chan, “Labor Unrest and Role of Unions”, *China Daily*, 18th June 2010 (cited in Benton, 2010: 327).
  139. Anita Chan, “Labor Unrest and Role of Unions”, *China Daily*, 18th June 2010 (cited in Hannan, 2010: 406).
  140. Later identified as a young man named Wang Weilin 王维林, whose fate remains unknown to date.
  141. Pablo Diego José Francisco de Paula Juan Nepomuceno María de los Remedios Cipriano de la Santísima Trinidad Ruiz y Picasso (25th October 1881 – 8th April 1973). *Guernica* (1937), arguably Picasso’s most famous work, is his portrayal of the German bombing of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War.
  142. Usually translated as “Blood-stained Glory” but literally “blood-stained elegance”, a song written in 1987 originally to commemorate those who died during the Sino-Vietnamese War, the melancholic tune came to be a hymn to the determined but forlorn struggle of the hunger strikers during the Tiananmen Square protests of 1989.
  143. Describing Franquist Spain, Gunther (1980: 2) stated, “The ultimate source of political authority was the Caudillo, himself. Officially a single-party authoritarian state, it can best be regarded as a no-party regime.”
  144. See, e.g., Hutton (2006: 8, 98, 144-148).
  145. Cited in Tong and Lei (2010: 499).
  146. Cited in Benton (2010: 321).
  147. For the application Green’s model to the China context, see Yeoh (2010a: 271), Figure 19.

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